

Cambridge University Press
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Richard MacAndrew
Excerpt
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Chapter 1 *Night call*

It was the middle of the night when Jenny Logan's phone woke her. She was tired and answered the phone sleepily.

'Logan.'

'Grant here, madam.'

'It's three o'clock in the morning, Grant. I hope this is important.'

'I'm at the home of Alex Maclennan. He's dead.'

'Give me the address, Grant. I'll be there in twenty-five minutes.'

* * *

Jenny Logan was an inspector in the Edinburgh Police. The phone often woke her at night. She got out of bed and dressed quickly in a blue suit. She looked at herself in the mirror and decided that her short brown hair looked all right. By a quarter past three she was driving through the streets of Edinburgh. It was December and there was snow on the ground. Princes Street was empty. She could see Edinburgh Castle high up to her left.

While she drove, Logan thought about Alex Maclennan. The Maclennans were famous in Scotland. Murray Maclennan, Alex's father, had over sixty fish and chip shops in different Scottish towns and cities. Everyone in Scotland knew Maclennan's Fish & Chips and most people ate them.

Murray Maclennan had one son, Alex. Murray did not

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want Alex to go into the family business so he sent him to an expensive school in Switzerland. Alex went from there to Bristol University in England, and then to a business school near Boston in the United States. Learning was important for Alex but so was having a good time. The Scottish newspapers were full of stories about his life: he was having dinner with film stars in Cannes; or he was having drinks with sports stars in Monte Carlo; or he was dancing with pop stars at a club in Manhattan. Alex knew how to enjoy himself.

Then six years ago Murray MacLennan died. Alex came back to Edinburgh. He got married and bought a house. Then he sold all the fish and chip shops and, together with an old schoolfriend, Ian Ross, he opened an expensive restaurant in Edinburgh.

Logan drove into Polwarth Gardens and stopped outside Alex MacLennan's house. Logan didn't come to rich areas of the city like this very often. She usually spent more time in the dirtier, poorer areas. Alex MacLennan's house was large and more than one hundred years old.

* * *

It was Sergeant Grant who opened the front door. He was fifty-eight and usually he looked young for his age. Tonight he was looking old and tired.

'Hello, madam. Come in,' he said.

'Where's the body, Grant?'

'On the first floor. In the bathroom.'

'The bathroom? OK. Let's go and have a look. What do you know so far?' asked Logan.

They started to climb the stairs.

'Well, madam. Mr MacLennan went to have a bath,

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probably at about eleven o'clock. He usually has a bath at about that time,' began Grant.

'I see.'

'Mrs Maclennan was already in bed,' Grant said. 'She says she fell asleep at about ten thirty and didn't hear her husband come up. Anyway, she woke up at one thirty and he wasn't in bed. She thought this was strange so she got up and went to look for him. She couldn't find him but the bathroom door was locked.'

'Did she try and get in?' asked Logan.

'Yes, she tried to break the door open but she couldn't, so she called her brother. He came round, broke open the door and they found Mr Maclennan dead, on the bathroom floor,' finished Grant.

Grant and Logan arrived at the bathroom. The walls were black; the bath, basin and toilet were white; the floor was black and white. Alex Maclennan's body was on the floor. There was a blue towel over his body.

'You say someone locked the door on the inside?' asked Logan.

'That's right, madam,' Grant answered. Grant showed Logan the broken wood.

'Has the doctor seen the body?' asked Logan.

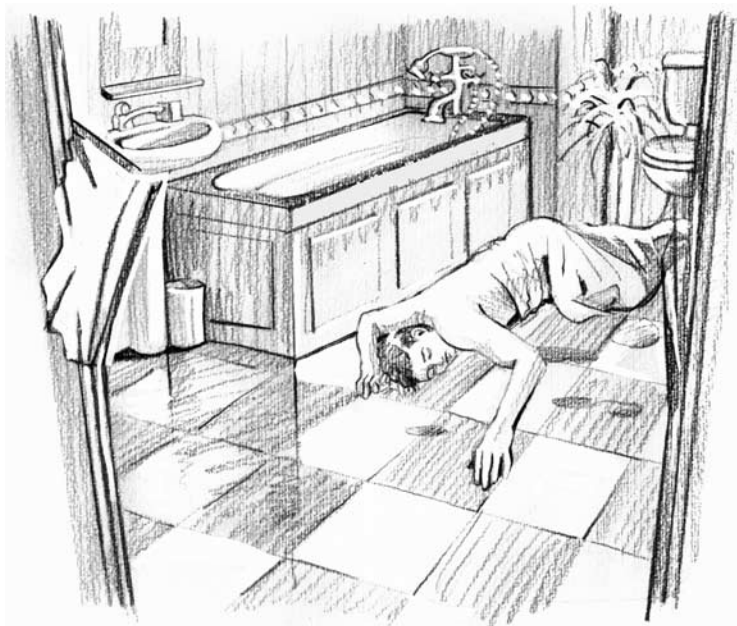
'Yes, madam. He left just before you arrived.'

'So how did he die, then?' asked Logan, looking down at Alex Maclennan's body.

'A broken neck, the doctor says. Looks like the floor was wet, he fell, hit the side of the bath – end of Alex Maclennan.'

Logan looked at the body more closely and then looked round the room. The floor was wet, but not very wet. The

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bath was empty. Alex MacLennan's body was dry. The towel was dry too.

'What about the window?' asked Logan.

'I thought about that,' said Grant. 'It's closed but not locked.'

Logan walked across the room and opened the window. She put her head outside and looked down. It was about six metres to the ground – not far.

'Right,' said Logan. 'Get the scientists here. I want them to look everywhere in this room very carefully. They must look at the window and the wall outside, and at the ground outside too.'

'OK, madam,' said Grant.

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'Now, where are the family and how are they?'

'Well, there's only Mrs Maclennan and her brother. They're both in the living room,' Grant answered.

Logan went down to the living room. A man and a woman were sitting next to each other on the sofa. The woman was probably in her late twenties but it was difficult to tell because she was crying. She had red hair and was wearing nightclothes.

'Mrs Maclennan, I'm Inspector Logan of the Edinburgh Police,' said Logan. 'I'm very sorry about your husband.'

'Thank you, Inspector,' the woman answered.

The man stood up. He was tall and dark and he looked strong. He was wearing a black jogging suit and he needed a shave.

'Good morning, Inspector. I'm Donald Johnstone, Alice's brother.'

'Hello, Mr Johnstone. I know this is a terrible time for you both, but I'm afraid I have to ask you some questions.'

'Must you?' asked Johnstone. 'Look at my sister. She's crying. Can't you wait?'

'Mr Johnstone, a man has died,' said Logan. 'I am a police officer. I need to find some answers.'

'It's all right, Donald,' said Alice Maclennan. She turned to Logan. 'I understand, Inspector. Please ask your questions.'

'But be quick!' said Johnstone.

'Mrs Maclennan, what time did your husband usually have a bath?' asked Logan.

'Well, he usually went upstairs at about eleven, had a bath and then came to bed,' Alice Maclennan answered.