



*The
Beginning*



Prologue

‘I wish you’d let me drive.’

‘’M fine, stop fussing!’

‘You’re not!’

‘*I am!*’

‘Look, there’s a lay-by, just pull over and let me-‘

‘*Look!* It’s fine! Patrick entrusted your well-being to me and I respect that.’

Lady Branwen Graveny, rested her head against the headrest and did her best to remain calm. It had been kind of him to drive her back but she just wished it had been her husband. She loved her brother-in-law dearly, of course she did but she just wished- oh well, it didn’t matter, besides, it was a quiet night and she had more important things to think about, in more ways than one. Suddenly, she was awoken by her brother-in-law saying.

‘God that’s bright! Fucking tosser!’

Ignoring his language, Lady Branwen felt herself tense up. ‘Robert, may-maybe you should slow down...’

‘You’re doing it again!’

‘No I mean it!’

‘’M fine!’

The car swerved violently, Branwen felt her heart leap to her throat, she closed her eyes and prepared to die, lord make it quick! She prayed, her husband, he would never know his child. Tears oozed out of eyes and ran down her cheeks the lights came thick and fast, brighter...brighter and then... and then...

Another car appeared a few minutes later, stopped beside the wreckage and surveyed the accident; the bashed up vehicles and the unconscious drivers. The driver tapped the steering wheel for a while before reaching for a pair of black gloves. Slowly getting out, the tall, shadowy figures walked towards the wreckage and approached the car. It felt for a pulse, first with Lady Branwen

and then Robert. It stopped and took a step back, it then checked the lorry driver's, alive but unconscious. The figure paused and looked at its watch, then, it hesitated before, with great difficulty, it hauled the bodies out of the car. It paused again before dragging Lady Branwen's round to the driver's side and putting Robert's into the passenger's. It stepped back to admire its work, glancing anxiously at the lorry driver in case he had regained consciousness. Calmly, he pulled the seatbelt over Robert, he then rubbed the steering wheel before picking up Lady Branwen's lifeless hands and rubbing them all over, he then left Lady Branwen slumped over the driving wheel. Then, calmly removing his gloves, he threw them in the nearest bin, took out his mobile and dialled 999.

Chapter One

A year later...

Lord Graveny looked at the envelope in his hands. He sighed and suddenly all those painful memories came flooding back, he wonder if, given the chance...no! No he mustn't think about that now, what was done was done. Suddenly there was a knock at the door.

'Come in!'

As if on cue, his little brother, the Hon. Robert Graveny stood before him, he was panting and looked as white as a sheet. 'Patrick! I *must* speak with you.'

'About what?'

'The police.'

'What about them?'

I think they're re-opening the case!'

Lord Graveny stared at his brother. 'Where did you hear this?'

'In the local!'

'Don't be silly! They would phone if-' As if on cue, the telephone rang and both brothers stared at it. He reached out to pick up the receiver but Robert grabbed his wrist.

'Are you *insane*???'

'*Look!* You have to trust me alright?' While his brother sat back, pursing his lips, Patrick reached out for the receiver.

'Hello? Lord Graveny speaking.'

'Ah! Good morning sir! Inspector Lloyd here, I was wondering if I could drop by to discuss a few things.'

'Um...Yes! Yes Of course, I am here all day. Thank you inspector.' He replaced the receiver and sat back.

'Well?'

He glanced up at his brother's anxious face, feeling merely annoyance rather than hatred. 'He just wants to come round and have a chat.'

'Shit! Shit! *Shit!!!!*'

'Robert keep it together for god's sake!'

'Yes but-'

'Just *leave it!* Alright? It'll be fine...Trust me.'

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She slowly looked at herself in the mirror as she fiddled with the necklace around her neck. She thought back to that horrific day and her heart went out to Patrick. They had been the perfect couple. It had seemed unusual though that her sister had been driving; she never drove if she was going to drink. Perhaps Robert was pissed, that was probably the explanation, everything about what the police had said just seemed wrong, her sister had always been the prudent type, she would never drive if she'd had *one* drink let alone two! Still, the evidence still seemed pretty damnable; she had been found in the driving seat, there was no doubt about that. *Pregnant* as well! Tears flowed fast and freely as she thought about Patrick, poor Patrick and what about Robert? He must be feeling guilty, although he had no reason to be.

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'Hello?'

'Patrick! Hi!'

'Oh! Hi Amy!'

'Long time!'

'Yes!'

'How-how are you?'

'Getting there, you?'

'The same although-'

‘Yes?’

‘I-I keep thinking back to that night...’

‘Amy-‘

‘I-I know it’s just that I’m pretty sure that there would be no way that Branwen would have been driving.’

‘Amy we’ve been through this!’

‘Yes I know but-‘

‘They found her in the driver’s seat, my brother was barely conscious; you are seriously not suggesting that my brother somehow managed to swap seats with her!’

She looked shocked. ‘*No! No of course not! I-*‘

‘Well good because my brother didn’t *exactly* emerge unscathed you know!’

‘Hey! Hey! Calm down! I’m not accusing *anyone!* I just think it’s a little out of character for her that’s all.’

There was a pause. ‘It-it was, I know.’

‘I-I mean, why would she do such a foolish thing?’

‘I suppose-‘

‘I mean she knows better than to drink and drive!’

Patrick remained silent, he didn’t dare tell her she had been pregnant at the time, a lump suddenly came to his throat. ‘I-I guess she must have lost track of the units.’ He closed his eyes and wished someone would stab him for his disloyalty.

‘Yes...easily done of course but I just don’t...’ She sighed and shook her head. ‘I don’t know, something just doesn’t add up.’

‘Look...I understand how you feel but, all I can say is that the police looked into everything most thoroughly, it was just a tragic accident.’

‘But...They might reopen the case, they might discover...’

‘No.’

‘Yes but-‘

‘*NO* Amy! She’s gone! Get over it! *I* had to!’

There was a silence then. ‘I-I’m sorry Patrick I-I just thought-‘

‘No! No don’t be sorry! I know, I miss her too.’

There was another silence. ‘You want to come over for dinner?’

‘Nah! I think I’ll just grab an early night.’

‘OK! Well...If you’re sure...’

‘I’m sure.’

That night, Patrick sat at his desk, looking through paperwork, his eye slowly flittered to the picture of him and his wife. Slowly, he reached out and stroked her smiling face, they had such plans. Feeling the tears prick his eyes, another wave of guilt washed over him, he did for the best he kept telling himself and she would understand, he was sure of it. The tears suddenly pricked his eyes again and he buried his face in his hands.

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Amy was frantically looking through all the newspaper clippings, anxious to pick up any clues. She was sure that there was more to this than met the eye, she had always been sure, ever since she had heard what had happened. It was no secret that Robert Graveny was a reckless individual, he didn’t care about anyone but himself, he must have got someone to help him; there was no way that Branwen had been driving, it was just so unlike her to have been driving in that fashion. Perhaps there had been a head on collision and Robert knew the other driver? She shook her head, no! He would have told Patrick and Patrick would never do such a thing to Branwen or her family, he loved her! There was another theory but she shook her head no, Branwen had been driving, the police themselves had confirmed that. It’s because I miss her, that’s all she said sadly to herself. Slowly, she reached for a photograph of them both at a birthday party; slowly big tears came into her eyes as she stroked the photograph.

‘Don’t worry sis! I’ll get to the bottom of this.’

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Patrick lay flowers down in front of the gravestone and stepped back.

‘Happy Birthday my darling.’ He whispered. There was a chilly wind and he pulled the coat further around him.

‘Hello Patrick!’

He turned round to see her parents, Jean and David come up the hill and forced a smile. ‘Jean! David! How are you both.’

‘Hello darling!’ She kissed his cheek. ‘How lovely for you to come here on her birthday.’

‘As if I’d forget, she wouldn’t have allowed it!’

‘No...’ Suddenly tears appeared in her eyes. ‘Oh God! I miss her so much!’

Her husband put an arm around her and hugged her to his side. ‘Shhh... I know darling! I know!’

‘I mean! Someone, somewhere must know something! She was one of the most sensible people on earth there was no *way* she would have done something like that!!’

Patrick felt sick. ‘Well...It isn’t impossible...’

‘*NO* Patrick! No! It’s not like her it just isn’t! This was done deliberately! It must have been staged!’

‘Jean! Look, I understand how you feel but the police are doing everything they can. In fact, they contacted me today, they may have another lead!’

Her eyes shone with hope. ‘Really?’

‘Yes!’ He winced, he felt guilty about lying but he knew that if he had told her it was yesterday, she would be demanding to know why he hadn’t said anything sooner. ‘So they are doing everything they can, they haven’t forgotten us.’

She smiled through her tears and stroked his cheek. ‘Oh! My daughter was so lucky when she met you.’

Patrick just smiled back, ignoring the guilty twinge.

Patrick forced himself to smile. ‘No, no I suppose they wouldn’t.’

He didn't know what to think as he drove home, his mind was full of pointless schemes, perhaps it was time to face things, he was a great one for owning up to one's responsibilities but even so, how could he? How could he throw his little brother to the wolves? Besides, his brother had enough on his plate what with this money he owed. There was something odd about that as well. It didn't just seem to add up, there was definitely something else going on and he intended to find out what it was.

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She stared across at the police station; her hands were still gripped on the steering wheel. Maybe she shouldn't have come, she said to herself, in theory it *was* only based on suspicion. Perhaps...she glanced at the station again and shook her head, she knew that all they would do would be to take down her details. No! It was best that she did it herself.

It was driving her crazy. She had to stop; she knew that it was no good for her. She needed to talk to Patrick, she needed some sort of peace of mind - she needed to be reassured that it really *was* a genuine accident. Slowly, she picked up the phone and dialled.

'Hello?'

'Patrick?'

'Amy! This is a surprise!'

'I nearly did it.'

'Did what?'

'Go to the police.'

There was a silence. 'Wh-what? Why?'

'I know! I know!'

'Amy, they've covered everything and they're just about to pick up the investigation again. What more do you want?'

'I know! I know I just thought-'

'Thought what?'

'That-that maybe I could help in some way...'

'Well...you can't.'

‘No, I know...’

‘So just leave it will you?’

‘Yes but-‘

‘*Leave it!*’

Feeling disheartened, Amy replaced the receiver, she closed her eyes and her mind travelled back to that night, she had been at that party as well and although it had been dark; she could have sworn that her sister hadn't been the one in the driver's seat.

