



# TELL NO TALES

*'A new author  
to watch'  
Sunday Express*

## EVA DOLAN

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## About the Book

The car that ploughs into the bus stop early one morning leaves a trail of death and destruction behind it.

DS Ferreira and DI Zigic are called in from the Peterborough Hate Crimes Unit to handle the investigation but with another major case on their hands, one with disturbing Neo-Nazi overtones, they are relieved when there seems to be an obvious suspect. But the case isn't that simple and with tensions erupting in the town, leading to more violence, the media are soon hounding them for answers.

Ferreira believes that local politician Richard Shotton, head of a recently established right-wing party, must be involved somehow. Journalists have been quick to acclaim Shotton, with his Brazilian wife and RAF career, as a serious contender for a major political career, despite his extremist views, but is his party a cover for something far more dangerous?

## About the Author

Eva Dolan is an Essex-based copywriter and intermittently successful poker player. *Long Way Home*, the first book in the DI Zigic and DS Ferreira series, was published in 2014 to outstanding critical acclaim.

Also by Eva Dolan

*Long Way Home*

# Tell No Tales

Eva Dolan



Harvill Secker  
LONDON

DAY ONE

# 1

AT 5 A.M. it was easy to tell which houses were still occupied by the English. No signs of life. No thoughts of getting up for a couple of hours at least.

Sofia stood at the window, the bedroom in darkness behind her, watching one light after another come on, skylights glowing in the converted attics. She remembered sleeping on an air bed under low eaves, three other girls squeezed in with her, fifty pounds a week, and at night she could see stars through the gaps in the slate roof. There was no skylight in that house, only a hatch which opened from below to let them out when the van arrived to take them into the endless black fields of the Lincolnshire fens.

It was a long time ago now.

She switched on the lamp and dressed quickly, leggings under her jeans, a vest and a long-sleeved T-shirt and one of Tomas's thick grey sweatshirts over the top. It was minus five last night and the pack house would be freezing. It was better than being out in the fields, she reminded herself, tramping up and down the rows with fingers so numb from cold that you could cut yourself and not realise until you felt a sudden, wet warmth.

She dragged her long brown hair into a hasty plait and tucked it into her collar, looking at Tomas's dirty washing sitting in the corner of the bedroom, mud crusted on the hems of his trousers and another man's blood on the thigh.

The image flashed quickly before her eyes, the Kurd's severed hand on the pack-house floor, Tomas holding him

upright, raising his wrist above his head to slow the bleeding as the old man screamed.

She snatched up the khaki combats, the jumper and the T-shirt which were spotted with blood even though she was sure Tomas wasn't wearing them that day. They shouldn't be in the house.

Someone else's blood - it attracted bad luck to you.

Sofia shoved them into a carrier bag which wasn't quite big enough, punched them down with her small, bony fist. The stains would come out if she soaked them in vodka but Tomas wouldn't wear them again.

In the bedroom across the hall Jelena's mobile was ringing. A different ringtone this week and Sofia was tired of telling her not to waste her money on them.

She heard Jelena moving around, the loose floorboard near her dressing table clacking.

'Ignore him,' Sofia shouted.

Jelena came out onto the landing, her pyjama top hanging loose over the waistband of her jeans, thick white socks on her feet.

*'Ja sam neznalica njemu.'*

'English,' Sofia said wearily. 'You will not get better if you do not speak.'

The phone kept ringing in Jelena's hand, the screen flashing in time to the music. 'I text him last night, tell him no.'

'You should say nothing. No text. Nothing.'

'I make him understand,' Jelena said.

'You encourage him like this,' Sofia told her. 'You must give him nothing.'

Jelena ran her fingertips through her ponytail, a nervous gesture she had brought with her from childhood. 'He will not stop if I do not speak to him.'

'I will speak to him.'

Sofia held out her hand but Jelena turned away, pressing the phone to her shoulder.

‘No. He will stop.’

He did. At that very moment. As if he could hear them.

‘We will change your number.’ Sofia rubbed Jelena’s arm, forced herself to smile. ‘Tonight, I will deal with this. Do not worry.’

She went down into the small white kitchen at the back of the house, put on the lights and the television and ran the tap until the water came through properly cold, trying to act like everything was normal. Like last night’s conversation had never happened. Hours later she had been sure she could hear Jelena’s muffled voice coming across the hall as she lay in the centre of the bed, trying to sleep, wishing Tomas was there next to her.

She lit a cigarette from the gas and waited for the kettle to boil.

Anthony was a small, timid man, but he was persistent and she knew at some point she would need to act. Her eyes strayed to the knife block on the black melamine counter – five sturdy wooden handles and five nicely weighted blades.

It would not come to that, she reassured herself.

The kettle rattled to the boil and Sofia called up to Jelena as she poured water into the cafetière, brewing the coffee strong, telling her they were going to be late if she didn’t hurry. She refilled the kettle to make up the flasks and took the bag of ruined clothes out to the bin.

There was frost in the air, spiked with chemicals from the industrial estate nearby, and her breath blossomed in front of her when she exhaled, the cold pricking her nose. Underfoot the grass crinkled softly. It needed cutting but that was Tomas’s job and neither of them knew how to work the temperamental lawnmower he’d bought from the car boot sale at the football ground. He said it was like a woman, required a strong hand, and Sofia told him Slovak women were not like lawnmowers, they only needed one blade to get the job done. He laughed and kissed her,

promised he would show her how it worked when he had a day off.

She dropped the bag into the bin and closed the lid slowly, aware of a rustling sound coming from the shadows behind the shed. A cat sprang out and ran across the garden, a white blur gone in an instant.

Jelena was taking their packed lunches out of the fridge when Sofia went back inside, beans and pasta in tomato sauce Sofia had cooked at the weekend and bagged up in individual portions for speed. Sofia had learned how to live on very little and even though they were earning well now the habit stayed with her. The more they saved the sooner they could stop working like this, always for other people's benefit and so many pairs of hands skimming off the top.

Jelena placed the Tupperware containers in her rucksack and tucked in their flasks, took one out again to double-check the lid.

She was concentrating too hard, her bottom lip between her teeth.

'You have spoken to him,' Sofia said.

Jelena zipped the bag slowly. 'I say I will not see him.'

'What did he say?'

Her eyes were shining, huge and blue. She swallowed but didn't reply.

Sofia knew what he said. Always the same threat but he didn't have the balls to see it through. He would have done it by now if he was going to. An act like that, you did it in the heat of anger and the heat was gone from him now, whether he understood that himself or not. He would get bored, move on to someone else. Another poor foreign girl who would be charmed by his English accent and his big German car.

'We have to go,' Sofia said. 'We will be late for work.'

She took Jelena's arm as they left the house and dragged her through the gate, joining the other people coming out

with their Thermos flasks and packed lunches, everyone moving in the same direction, down towards the main road.

Half past five and the rest of the city was still sleeping, but Lincoln Road was bustling already. The terraced houses lit up and disgorging their occupants onto the street, the road running steady with delivery lorries and white vans heading into the centre of Peterborough, transporters full of workers coming home from shifts cleaning offices, twelve hours packaging produce on the Eastern Industrial Estate. One lot out and a quick turn-around to collect the day workers.

A van pulled up across the road, outside the Polish grocer's where Sofia and Jelena no longer shopped. They sold counterfeit cigarettes and vodka which was illegally stilled on the fens by a Bulgarian family, rough, raw stuff that was only fit for cleaning your sink with. Out front a few men, just off shift, sat at the cafe tables drinking bottled beer, shattered but not ready for bed yet.

They stood at their usual spot outside the bus shelter, the only two workers for the Boxwood Farm van. The first stop on the driver's route. There was another man waiting this morning though, hunched and tired-looking, vaguely familiar. Someone Tomas knew. When he muttered a 'good morning' she managed to reply, but her attention was focused on Jelena, reaching into her pocket for her mobile. That ringtone blaring.

Sofia shot her a look as she checked the display.

'Who is that?'

'Marta,' she said, angling her body away to shield the screen, taking a couple of small steps closer to the kerb.

The man said something else and Sofia answered him shortly, watching Jelena bite her lip as she listened to the voice on the other end which was definitely not Marta.

In the distance car horns blared above the traffic noise and an engine revved, a deep, throaty rattle as a white Volvo shot across lights and accelerated up Lincoln Road,

swerving erratically around a cyclist. Sofia froze as its headlights washed the pavement, silhouetting Jelena's figure, her back to the car, phone to her ear. Sofia opened her mouth to scream but no sound came out. Then she heard a bang and something slammed into her and the world turned black as her head hit the ground.

BY SIX FIFTEEN they had shut down a hundred-yard stretch of Lincoln Road. Both lanes blocked off, signs diverting the traffic along the narrow side streets, which would be snarled up with delivery lorries trying to get into the shopping centre and vans making for the covered market behind Peterborough Cathedral.

BBC Cambridgeshire was already reporting a hit-and-run. They were sketchy on the details, but DI Dushan Zigic knew there was one dead at the scene, two more, unlikely to make it, on the way to Edith Cavell's A&E department.

The initial newsflash had reported the dead and injured as migrant workers. Fifteen minutes later the hourly bulletin made no mention of ethnicity, only a group of people waiting at a bus stop. The press officer must have called them from her bed to shut them up that fast, Zigic guessed.

She was fighting the tide though. Before he left the station the desk sergeant showed him footage of the accident on YouTube, filmed by a steady hand as people from the cafe opposite ran across the road to help, shouting in languages Zigic didn't understand.

The desk sergeant told him to be grateful - they had an image of their driver from it. Not that it showed much, medium build, dark clothes, the man's face a pale smudge as he sprinted off towards the rat runs of bedsit land, escaping along the same side street that Zigic turned down now.

Ahead of him a car was executing a three-point turn, finding the access onto Lincoln Road blocked off by the

police cordon. Zigic flashed to let them pass then pulled onto the kerb outside a new development of three-storey houses.

As he got out of the car he checked for CCTV along the narrow lane, spotted a single camera mounted under the sagging gutters of the building on the corner, trained, bizarrely, on one of the upstairs windows.

Zigic ducked under the perimeter tape and entered the crime scene.

Everything looked washed out and insubstantial under the early-morning light and he realised he'd never seen Lincoln Road at a standstill before. Cars were backed up from either end of the crash site but nobody was honking or shouting and the hush which had descended only added to the sense of unreality.

The car was real though. A bulky, old model Volvo with a replacement driver's side door badly resprayed in a slightly off shade of white. It had ploughed through the group waiting around the bus shelter and only finally lost momentum when it slammed through the front wall of the terraced house behind it.

He saw the interior of the living room, stripped back to bare plaster and shrouded in dust which hadn't yet settled, a light fitting hanging from the ceiling, no bulb in it. A new bathroom suite still swaddled in plastic was shoved into a corner, waiting to be shifted upstairs. That was something, he thought. No fatalities there.

But it felt like a small mercy when he looked at the shattered carcass of the bus shelter, its Perspex walls snapped and bloodstained, its red plastic seats tangled under the Volvo's rear wheels. Nearby sat a rucksack, split open, spilling two Tupperware lunch boxes and a flask.

A blue-suited scenes-of-crime officer shouted at him.

'Ziggy - shift or smile.'

He saw the photographer at distance and got out of his sight line, stood in the middle of the road, watching the man

move in closer, panning slowly across the body of the Volvo, then moving closer, up to the open driver's door and the airbag which was still inflated and spotted with blood. The photographer focused on the shattered windscreen and the buckled bonnet, then a shallow dent on the roof of the car where a body had landed, blood still tacky on the paintwork. The wipers had kicked in on the rear windscreen and dragged the blood across the glass.

At the north end of the crime scene a small crowd was gathering, corralled by a couple of community support officers in high-visibility jackets. The onlookers were too far away to see anything, but Zigic noticed at least half of them had their phones held out, recording the action for whatever fleeting posterity it would find online.

'We've got two survivors,' DS Ferreira said, coming across the street to him.

She had been the first on the scene just after dawn and from the way she was dressed he imagined she hadn't been home long at that point, a creased black top under a short leather jacket and jeans tucked into knee-high boots; last night's clothes still on.

She lived a couple of minutes further along Lincoln Road, too close to escape being involved.

'Witnesses?' Zigic asked.

'Dozens, yeah, and they're all saying the same thing. He accelerated up here from the south, jumped the lights and swerved across the traffic to hit them.' She frowned. 'The driver made it out. Took off up the road there on foot.'

Two more vehicles sat smashed in the middle of the road, their front bumpers locked together, bonnets crumpled, a red Seat and a courier's van. They were lucky it hadn't caused a major pile-up.

'There's no way this was an accident,' Ferreira said.

'Let's not jump to conclusions, Mel.'

'Riggott's given us it, he obviously thinks it's deliberate. And racially motivated.'

'He's got a heavy caseload.'

'Like we haven't.'

The photographer gave the all-clear and moved away to pack up his equipment. Within seconds three more interchangeable, androgynous figures descended on the car and Zigic watched them work with a vague feeling of envy. It was a standardised procedure for them, the same at every crime scene: photograph, document, collect, collate. And once that was done the messy process of extracting guilt from the information became someone else's problem.

'Have we got IDs on the victims yet?' he asked.

'Two of them, yeah. The paramedics had the other one away before I arrived. I sent them back to the office a few minutes ago. Hold on, I'll give you them now.' Ferreira took out her mobile, swiped the screen. Zigic's phone beeped as they hit his inbox. 'I talked to the driver who was coming to collect them - he's pretty shook up.'

'As you'd expect.'

'He was running late, so he's blaming himself now. You know the deal, if he'd been on time they wouldn't have been standing out here to get run down.' Ferreira shrugged and it was more like a shiver. 'He's gone to Edith Cavell with one of the women.'

'How bad is she?'

'The paramedics think she'll make it but her sister took the full force. She was standing at the kerb.'

A trailer with a hefty orange crane on its cab pulled up to the perimeter tape and Ferreira hollered at the uniforms to let it in. They needed to get the street running again as soon as possible. Almost seven now and the rest of Peterborough was stirring towards work, waking to the news of this horrific event. The speculation would build quickly and DCS Riggott had made it abundantly clear that a swift resolution was needed.

'Nobody wants this to get politicised,' he'd said.

But it would. Once the press, and the public, caught on to the fact that it was being investigated by the Hate Crimes Department the racial element would become the focus. Zigic wondered why Riggott didn't handle it in CID if he wanted to keep a lid on it, and realised he was probably covering his arse already - you didn't make it to his rank without knowing how to delegate blame.

'Alright, we need to talk to the families, see if any of the victims pissed someone off recently.'

'So you do think it was deliberate.'

'We need to cover all the angles.'

Ferreira planted her fists on her hips, looked away at the car. One of the forensics officers was squatting down by the passenger-side footwell, another had the boot open, going through the contents, bagging an empty water bottle and a travel rug.

The chief scenes-of-crime officer, Kate Jenkins, walked over to them, tucking her springy red hair under the hood of her bodysuit.

'Don't know about you two, but I can think of better ways to start the day.'

'How long do you think you need here?' Zigic asked.

'Straight to business. Fair enough.'

'Sorry, Kate.'

'I understand.' She nodded towards the ever lengthening line of cars stretching north. 'Can't have a few deaths holding people's day up. We'll take some preliminary samples to be on the safe side but we can do the serious work back at the garage.'

'Have you got anything?'

'The blood on the airbag's fresh, almost definitely from the driver judging by the placement,' she said. 'Some hairs, fingerprints. He wasn't careful. Although it looks like he had his seat belt on, so that message got through.'

'Will it have left a mark?' Zigic asked.

'The airbag definitely.' Jenkins' mouth twisted. 'The seat belt? Maybe. Depends on how fast he was going.'

'The witnesses we have said he was accelerating,' Ferreira told her.

'It's fairly likely then.'

A horn blared across the road, a white van running into the edge of the cordon on Taverners Road, and quickly the note was taken up by more cars. The spell was broken and suddenly the waiting traffic became like a single angry entity, shouting, swearing and gesturing out of open windows.

Jenkins scowled at the van. 'Guess I should crack on then.'

'This is going to start getting nasty,' Ferreira said. 'Maybe we should draft in some more uniforms just in case.'

'Call in and see who you can get down here.' Zigic's mobile rang. 'What is it, Bobby?'

'The Volvo's registered to a Paul Devlin, lives over in Stanground.'

'Has he got form?' Zigic asked.

'Couple of speeding tickets, nothing major.'

'Until now.'

PAUL DEVLIN LIVED on a nice quiet development of semi-detached houses with large bay windows and well-maintained front gardens, carports to the side, most of them still occupied at this time of morning. It was an area dominated by retirees now; Zigic's grandparents lived a few minutes away on the same estate, surrounded by people just like them who had bought from new and never moved on.

His grandparents were among the first foreigners to move into Stanground and back in the 1960s they weren't made welcome. Their neighbours fancied themselves as professionals, engineers from the long-defunct Perkins plant, people who worked in banks and offices. They didn't appreciate the sudden influx of Slavs and Italians who brought big, boisterous families with them and filled the classrooms of the local primary with kids who had English as a second language, didn't like the idea of overpaid brickyard workers dragging the area down.

They wouldn't like the new township being built beyond the estate either, Zigic guessed. Seventy per cent social housing and all the problems which went along with it. Maybe that was why there were so many For Sale boards in the neat front gardens, despite the downturn in the property market.

He turned onto Alma Road and parked behind the patrol car sitting twenty yards away from Paul Devlin's house. Two uniforms got out, big men ready for action, and they fell in step behind him as they approached the place, boots dull

against the pavement, radios squawking into the peaceful morning air, clashing with the birdsong.

The curtains were drawn at Devlin's front windows, no lights on, but there was a car in the driveway, a brand-new Corsa waxed to a high shine.

Zigic signalled for one of the men to go round the back and heard him bang through the metal gate as he rang the doorbell, a wonky two-tone chime sounding.

He waited, aware of the neighbours stirring. Saw an elderly woman appear in the window to his right, half hidden by thick net curtains bleached a brilliant white. Behind him a door opened and a reedy voice called across the road.

'He's at home. He doesn't work.'

The man was in his dressing gown, bowed legs sticking out, a small black dog between his feet, yapping excitedly.

'Thank you, sir,' Zigic said. 'Please, go back inside.'

He rang the doorbell again and squatted down to peer through the letter box. The hallway was spartan, laminate floor and white walls, coir matting on the staircase. There was a black padded jacket on the post, similar to the one worn by the man he'd seen on YouTube running away from the crime scene.

'Shall I get the ram, sir?' PC Blake asked.

Feet appeared at the top of the stairs, began to trudge down slowly in backless slippers.

'No need.'

Paul Devlin opened the front door in his boxers and a Coldplay T-shirt, one eye half closed and his blond hair sleep-mussed. He looked about the right build for their man, five ten, solid but not fat. He yawned into their faces as he asked what they wanted.

Zigic flashed his warrant card. 'I'd like you to come with us please, Mr Devlin.'

'What?' He made a perfectly confused face, blinked, wrinkled his chin. 'Why?'

'Your car was involved in a hit-and-run this morning.'

Devlin took a step back, eyes widening, and Zigic crossed the threshold.

'One person's dead, two more might not make it.'

Devlin swayed where he stood, eyes on the open door and Blake's meaty form blocking it, and Zigic got ready to grab him if he decided to make a run for it.

'But my car's outside,' Devlin said.

'Your other car,' Zigic told him, impatience clipping his words. 'It'll be better for you if you come quietly now.'

'Other car? My old Volvo?' Zigic nodded. 'I sold it a couple of weeks ago.'

'It's still in your name,' Zigic said.

'I gave him all the paperwork, he told me he'd sort it out.'

Behind Zigic the PC sighed, like he'd heard this kind of nonsense a thousand times before and he was in no mood to listen to it again.

Did Devlin look like a man who had run away from a fatal crash within the last couple of hours, though? The skin of the left side of his face was reddened, maybe from the airbag deploying, or maybe from a crease in his pillow. Zigic stepped closer to him, saw gunge in the corners of his bloodshot eyes, a smear of crusted drool on his chin.

'Would you lift your T-shirt please, sir?'

Devlin clutched at the hem. 'What? Is this some kind of joke?'

'Just do it.'

He complied reluctantly, someone who was used to being pushed around, Zigic thought.

'All the way, please.'

Devlin's exposed chest was milk white and almost hairless, but there was no sign of bruising from the seat belt, not even a hint of abrasion. Zigic told him to cover up again.

'Who did you sell the car to?'

'Some guy on eBay. Him and a mate came to the house, paid me cash, and took it away.'

'I need a name.'

'He was foreign,' Devlin said.

'That isn't an answer.'

Devlin shoved his fingers back through his hair, stared at the floor for a few long seconds, eyes wide, before he shook his head.

'I can't remember. He said he was local, if that's any help.'

'You must have a phone number for him,' Zigic said. 'How did he arrange when to come?'

'I'll check.'

He headed back upstairs and Zigic told Blake to go and speak to the neighbours, see if any of them noticed Devlin go out earlier this morning, or if they remembered two men calling at the house to take the car away. He'd bet someone saw something, the neighbourhood watch was Stasi-like around here.

A moment later Devlin came back down the stairs, phone in hand, shaking his head.

'Sorry, I deleted it.' He shrugged. 'There was no point keeping it once he'd paid.'

Zigic crossed his arms. 'So, basically, I might as well arrest you right now.'

Devlin put his hands up. 'Look, I can show you the auction details on eBay. It'll have his buyer ID on there - can't you get his name and address and everything from that? You can do that, right? They'll tell you if you ask.'

He started swiping at his phone's screen.

'I can't believe this is happening.'

Zigic looked back out through the open door, saw PC Blake pointing towards the house, a small, blonde woman with a baby on her hip nodding, talking in a fast, animated fashion, her free hand gesturing wildly. Devlin wasn't their man. Zigic was 90 per cent sure of that. The eBay auction could be an elaborate ruse but he doubted it.

'Here.' Devlin handed his mobile over and Zigic checked the completed listing, a small photograph of the white Volvo

sitting on his driveway, a sold price of four hundred pounds. 'Bogdan879 - that's his user ID.'

Zigic nodded. 'That's very helpful, Mr Devlin, thank you. I wouldn't mind coming down to the station, I need you to make a statement.'

'Now?'

'Yes, now. Get dressed.'

PC Blake crossed the road as Zigic went out onto the drive.

'Lady over the road remembers two ugly-looking blokes turning up the other week,' Blake said. 'Arrived in a burgundy Mitsubishi 4x4 with blacked-out windows. Big lads, she reckons, six foot, dark-haired, built like the proverbials. They were here about fifteen minutes, giving the car a good going-over.'

'And they definitely took it?'

'Yes, sir.'

'OK, that's something.' Zigic nodded, more to himself than Blake, feeling the momentum building, a definite line of inquiry emerging. 'Take Devlin to the station and park him for a bit.'

'Yes, sir.'

Zigic climbed back into the car and rang Wahlia as he pulled off the kerb, gave him the eBay user details, told him to work his charms.

'Any news?'

'Mel just called, they've taken the car away and the road's reopened.'

'That's the council off our backs anyway.'

'Riggott's sent up a couple of helpers too,' Wahlia said. 'I've got them going through the witness statements and the CCTV, thought that's what you'd want.'

'Great, thanks, Bobby.'

'And the press officer's looking for you.'

Zigic's hands tightened around the wheel. 'Of course she is.'

FERREIRA WATCHED THE low loader pull away from the kerb, the Volvo firmly secured to its flatbed, on its way to the garage for the next round of forensics examinations. The perimeter of the locus was quickly dismantled, the police tape stripped away, releasing the vehicles built up beyond it, and within a few seconds the traffic on Lincoln Road was moving freely again. Like nothing had happened.

She cast a last glance at the patch of pavement around the broken remains of the bus shelter, where a council crew were preparing to clean away the final traces of the accident, then walked away in the opposite direction, heading home to change out of the night before's rank clubbing gear.

Her parents' pub, The Angel, sat at the quieter end of the New England suburb. It was a sprawling white-painted brick building surrounded by terraced houses carved up into rent-a-room flops, Polish nail bars and Lithuanian hairdressers', convenience stores specialising in Eastern European produce and counterfeit tobacco, cafes and off-licences with tables out front, the kind of places which were buzzing at 7 a.m. as the night-shift workers came home. She passed a tattoo parlour with a man standing smoking a joint in the open doorway and a second-hand furniture store where the owner was beginning to bring his wares out for the day, pine chairs and old fridges, a sagging sofa already on the pavement.

She rolled a cigarette as she walked, trying not to think about the black-haired man she'd seen impaled on a metal

pole from the bus shelter, still alive she was sure as she ran towards him.

The pub's front doors were thrown open onto the street, a blackboard outside announcing that they were serving a full English breakfast. They pulled in a lot of natives at this time of morning, builders and van drivers en route to the retail parks nearby, the kind of men who wanted to drink a beer with their breakfast without being judged.

Ferreira slipped down the side of the building and into the car park, where a delivery van was ticking over, no sign of the driver but the cellar doors were open. He was probably down there listening to her father cracking jokes. He'd decided early on that the famous British sense of humour was the best way to assimilate and he'd taken to it so enthusiastically that around other men his entire conversation was set-up, punchline.

She ran up the metal fire escape, ignoring how it swayed under her, and let herself into their living quarters. Four bedrooms, a sitting room and two bathrooms for five people. The pub opened at 6 a.m and closed when the last customer left and the only way to manage those hours was in shifts. Her brothers did lates, her parents days, and if she wasn't careful they'd have her down there now clearing tables and loading the dishwasher. *Just twenty minutes, Melinda - do you think the whole city will descend into chaos if you aren't at your little desk?*

She showered quickly, finding the water tepid as usual and nothing but a hand towel to dry off with, dressed in fresh black jeans and a grey jumper, stamped her feet into her boots as she brushed her hair with one hand and packed her bag with the other.

Her bedroom door opened as she reached for the handle and her mother poked her head in. She looked tired, despite her heavily applied make-up, as if the only thing keeping her eyes open was how tightly she'd drawn back her greying

hair. Always in the same neat bun, ever since Ferreira could remember.

‘Mum, I haven’t got time for this.’

‘For what? I only want to know if you are staying for breakfast.’

She grabbed her keys. ‘I’ve got to go.’

‘They are saying on the radio that there was an accident.’

‘We’re not sure it was yet.’

Her mother crossed herself. ‘Such people there are to do this.’

Ferreira kissed her on the head and made for the door.

‘Be careful, Melinda.’

‘Always am.’

She hit the rush-hour traffic in the city centre and for the thousandth time cursed the distance between her home and Thorpe Wood Station, then she cursed the driver in front of her for stopping at an amber light when the pedestrian crossing was obviously clear, then the roadworks on the Crescent Bridge which held her up for five minutes even though there wasn’t a workman in sight.

Wahlia called as she pulled into the station car park, asked if she was planning on coming in today, and she looked up to see him staring out of the office window, gestured for him to get her a coffee and received a two-fingered salute in return.

She ran up the steps, ducked through reception where a reporter from the *Evening Telegraph* was gossiping with the desk sergeant, after information he wouldn’t be allowed to print. She went upstairs through the bustle and hum of CID, heard DCS Riggott’s sharp Belfast accent rattling across the office and saw that the press officer was on the receiving end, standing with her arms folded and an expression of amused contempt on her face.

Wahlia met Ferreira at the door with a mug of black coffee.

‘Thanks, Bobby.’

'Don't get too used to it.'

He went back around to his side of the desk, where his phone was playing amplified hold music, interrupted every so often by a voice reassuring him that his call was important and would be dealt with soon.

'Where's Zigic?'

'In his office.'

The door was closed but through the venetian blinds she could see him moving, the room too small for a man of his height to pace properly. There were two extra detective constables, drafted in from CID, working quietly at the usually unoccupied desks across the room, one hunched over, chewing on a pen lid as she watched CCTV footage, another just as focused on the screen of his computer, tapping his fingers against the keyboard.

Ferreira went to the whiteboard where the investigation was plotted out, their victims listed on the left. Jelena Krasic, deceased; Sofia Krasic - the sister she presumed - at A&E; a man, seriously injured, currently nameless.

It looked worse, she thought, all of that carnage. It looked like a massacre.

There was a single name in the suspects column.

'What's happening with this Devlin guy?' she asked.

'He's giving a statement right now. Don't think he's our man,' Wahlia said. 'He sold the car on eBay, I'm trying to track down the buyer. If they ever fucking answer.'

He had the feedback profile open on his computer - Bogdan879 and a list of positive reviews from people he'd bought cars from. Ferreira reached over and scrolled down the page. Dozens of cars going back across the last four months.

'He's a dealer then,' she said.

'Looks like it.'

'So pretty unlikely he was driving.' She went back to the top. 'I thought they told you where the person was based on here. It just says UK.'