

NIGHT-SHIFT

Victoria Hancox

Chapter 1

Tuesday, 10th December 2002

She padded purposefully down the main thoroughfare of the operating department, her soft clogs making thwacking noises on the floor. The sound reverberated around and even though she knew she was alone, she couldn't resist the urge to look around and check there was no-one walking behind her.

Of course, she was alone. She always was.

As she continued walking, she periodically reached out to switch off the lights, plunging the corridor into ever-increasing darkness. Eventually, she reached the end of the corridor. The doorway down to the coffee-room. She paused and looked back over her shoulder. Dark except for the muted glow from the emergency lighting. Silent except for the electrical humming from a variety of life-saving machines. Peaceful. She peered down at the fluorescence hands on her watch. 1:48AM. She pushed open the door.

"Ah, there you are!" Nancy shouted from the far-end of yet another long corridor. "I was going to send out the search parties!"

On the contrary, Nancy didn't look worried at all. She remained sitting in her favourite chair in the coffee-room (the comfiest one, naturally), complete with a mug of coffee in one hand, chicken mayonnaise sandwich in the other and a magazine on her lap.

"The sluice cleaning took longer than normal - it was blocked up with clots" Sara responded, watching for some sign of remorse. There was none. She sighed and went to the kitchen.

"I made you a cup of coffee," Nancy said, "but it's probably gone cold by now." Sara lifted the cup to her lips and sipped. Lukewarm. Great!

Nursing never claims to be glamorous but hawking massive blood-clots from the drains really took the biscuit. So how come, night after night, it was Sara wearing the gloves, up to her elbows in stinking body matter. It wasn't fair. And yet, night after night, when the last emergency operation had finished, Nancy said that she'd do *all* the restocking while Sara does the tidying up! As if she was breezing around with a duster! One of these days, Sara thought, I'm going to say something... She pulled her now hot coffee out of the microwave and stirred vigorously, taking her temper out on the cup. Who was she trying to kid? She'd never say anything!

"How did you sleep yesterday?" Sara enquired as she sat down opposite the older nurse. Nancy launched into a long-winded tale involving her two children, the

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school run and a neighbour's lawnmower. When she'd finished and Sara's sympathetic noises had run their course, Nancy picked up her magazine and resumed reading the gossip about a pregnant soap actress. Sara waited patiently but eventually, it was apparent that Nancy wasn't interested in her well-being. She stood up.

"I only slept for 3 hours myself," she said. "The postman woke me up first, then some workmen were drilling outside. I'm going for a lie-down next door."

Nancy nodded, distractedly.

"OK. I'll give you a shout if any emergencies come in."

I bet you will, thought Sara as she went into the old smoking room and closed the door. She pulled a couple of chairs together as a make-piece bed and grabbed a clean blanket from the pile designated for the patients. She took a deep breath as she closed her eyes and tried to let her bitterness go. After all, another day, another dollar. From the adjacent room, a blast of noise came from the radio. Nancy hated the silence of the night-shift.

Thanks for nothing, Sara groaned to herself. She pulled the blankets high round her head, to try to muffle the noise and in an uncomfortable contortion, she drifted off to the sound of The Beatles. 'Hard Day's Night' How apt!

And then she was awake. For a second, she lay rigid, certain that something must have roused her. She waited and listened but all she could hear was 'California Dreaming' playing on the radio. Gradually, she unfurled her body and pulled her wrist from under the blanket. 3:05AM. Shit! Just one hours sleep! And five more left on the shift. There was no point trying to go back to sleep though, so she got up, made a fresh drink and entered the coffee-room.

The cup slipped from her hand and smashed into thousands of shards that bounced off the floor. The hot liquid splashed onto her legs but she didn't even notice. Her only coherent thought was, that in all her years as a theatre nurse, Sara had never seen so much blood come from one person.

The pool of congealing, dark red liquid spread halfway across the room. The walls, the chairs and even the ceiling were coated with a spray of red droplets.

Sara froze, her jaw clenched in a silent scream, the only movement were her hands which convulsively twisted the material of her theatre scrubs. As she stared, with unblinking, bulging eyes, the blood continued it's slow encroachment, crawling towards her over the linoleum like a lava flow. And in it's path were footprints - large, red prints with a defined heavy tread that faded and became invisible as they reached

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the door. The magazine that Nancy had been reading, lay abandoned on the floor, it's pages curling with the wetness that surrounded and drenched them. The phone lay next to it, with the receiver stamped into fragments of metal, wires and plastic.

Slowly, she raised her eyes to Nancy's. The nurse was sat bolt upright in her chair, hands lying limply at each side. Her eyes were glazed but her face still held an expression of absolute terror. Nancy's head was tilted back against the wall, displaying the gaping wound in her throat. A wound so deep that Sara could see the stark white of the vertebrae against the rich scarlet of the neck muscles. The open ends of the carotid arteries had long since stopped pumping blood and had collapsed in on themselves but the severed windpipe remained defiantly yawning, although no air would whistle through it again.

A voice inside Sara's head muttered "She's dead, she's dead, she's dead" over and over again, blocking out all other thoughts. The sound of her own rapid, harsh breaths eventually caught Sara's attention. She felt hot bile surge into her throat and she pressed a fist against her mouth. Finally, she turned away. She started to shake, imperceptibly at first then more violently. Her thoughts were now whirring, unleashed, round her head.

This can't be happening, the doors are locked, no-one can get in, why would anyone kill Nancy, why didn't I hear anything, what if he's still here, WHAT IF HE'S STILL HERE! Sara gasped and her head whipped round to the doorway, half expecting some-one to be stood there.

No-one. And the department seemed silent. Sara became conscious of the frantic thudding of her heart. Deliberately, she took a deep breath and flexed her clenched hands.

"I have to get out of here, right now!" she whispered urgently, hoping that the sound of her own voice would ground her. If she was going to out of here in one piece, literally, she was going to have to stop panicking and start thinking. She crept towards the open doorway and standing over the faded, bloody footprints, peered into the corridor beyond. Nothing and no-one. So far, so good. As the seconds ticked loudly by, she stood there considering her next move. What should she do now? All she wanted to do, was to crawl onto the floor, close her eyes and wait for some-one to find her. It was tempting, but the niggling thought at the back of her mind said - what if it's *him* that finds you. She shuddered and shook her head. No, that was not going to happen. Not tonight, not to her!

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She considered her options and quickly decided that the adjacent intensive care unit was the best bet. It was staffed by at least eight nurses every night and there were bound to be doctors, porters and relatives too. Safety in numbers, she thought. Now all she had to do, was get there.

Without looking back at the carnage, Sara stepped into the well-lit, narrow corridor. Immediately, she realised that her theatre clogs were useless. Not only were they loud but if she had to run, they'd trip her up. On the other hand, running in socks could be just as risky. The floor was smooth and hard - she'd be skidding all over the place! The changing-room door was only three feet to her right. It was possible to go and put her trainers on, but what if *he's* in there. Shit! Sara felt the panic bubbling up inside her. She ran a shaky, clammy hand through her red hair, pushing it off her face. Calm down, for Christ's sake, she told herself. Taking another deep breath, the answer came to her. She bent down, slipped the clogs *and* her socks off. The socks, she shoved in her pocket, and then held one of the clogs in her right hand. Not much as weapons go, but it was better than nothing.

"OK, here's goes" she said and started moving. Sara ran quickly down the centre of the corridor, making sure that she kept away from the countless doors that hid offices or supply cupboards. Four seconds later, she reached the door that led to main department. She slid into the corner, her back pressing against the hinges. She couldn't get her breath, at first. It felt like she was wearing the tightest corset and all she could manage were painful, shallow gasps. Her eyes darted along the length of the corridor, scrutinising every inch. Nothing. Finally, she could breath again. She listened carefully, for any sign of the intruder, even pressing her ear up against the door. Nothing. She leaned back, watching the damp imprint of her palm quickly evaporate off the laminate. She could smell the fear rising off her body, an unpleasant mixture of stale deodorant and fresh sweat. She yanked her scrubs, back and forward, to waft a cool breeze over herself and licked her dry lips with what little saliva she had.

"OK, so far, so good" she murmured, as she planned the next stage in her head. The operating department had two exits that connected it with the rest of the hospital. The main exit was locked from the inside and Nancy, presumably, still had the keys in her pocket. No good. The other exit was controlled by a key pad lock. To open it, you had to punch in a 4-number code and it lead directly to the intensive care unit.

"7135. Bingo! Now all I have to do is get there."

Sara gripped the clog tightly in her hand and swivelled to face the door. In her

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mind's eye, she could see the wide stretch of darkness that lay between her and safety. All the alcoves and theatres. Lots of hiding places. She felt her legs go rubbery and tears flooded into her eyes. For a second, she rested her forehead on the door.

"No! Don't you dare give up!" admonished the voice in her head. Sara raised her head, sighed then nodded in agreement. "Let's go"

She pulled the handle, cursing as the door opened with a swishing noise. Too loud. She crept forward till she stood in the doorway and peered round. Dark but empty and silent. The exit door could be seen at the opposite end of the corridor. She reckoned it would take her about 12 seconds to get there.

Taking one deep breath, she set off.

With her eyes sweeping constantly from left to right like a predator hunting food, she padded quickly along. The only sound was the rhythmical slapping of her bare feet on the floor.

And then she was there. The doorway was set back in the wall, creating a narrow alcove which she slammed into. Her heart was racing and again, every breath was tortured and hurt. But she'd made it! A giggle of hysteria bubbled up inside her.

But then she heard it.

A gentle thud of a door closing and footsteps. The smile and colour drained from her face. Her bowels felt loose and icy and for a split-second, Sara thought she was going to vomit.

Sweet Jesus, no! This can't be happening! Her brain was frozen in complete denial but gradually, she realised that the footsteps were getting quieter. He was moving away from her. Like a World War I soldier sticking his head over the parapet, she peeked out.

What are you doing? You should be getting out of here! You should unlock the door and run. Sara ignored the voice in her head although, she acknowledged that it was probably talking sense. Besides, unlocking the door would make too much noise. If she could hide till he's gone.....

There he was. Sara caught a whimper in her throat and bite down on her lip. So, it was real. Up until now, she'd still been hoping it was all a dream. He was almost at the other end of the thoroughfare, walking away from her. Looking for her? It was a relaxed, self-assured walk. He was tall and well-built with broad shoulders with dark, cropped hair. Just the sort of man that Sara would normally find attractive. He had an aura of strength and confidence. With another wave of nausea, Sara knew that she didn't

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stand a chance against him. Feeling more frightened and helpless than she ever had in her life, her gaze slid upwards as the tears slid silently down her cheeks.

A single thought passed in her mind as she stared at the ceiling. I don't want to die.

And then she realised that the footsteps had stopped.

She looked sharply back down the corridor and saw that he was stood stock still in the middle of the corridor, staring ahead of himself. Sara sprang back into the niche, trying to make herself as small as possible. Oh God, had he heard her? Could he sense her? The silence continued. Sara tried not to breath, tried to suck every part of her body into the wood pressing behind her. The silence continued. Jesus, what is he waiting for? What is he doing?

Sara could see the keypad for the lock out of the corner of her eye. Should she open the door but then he'd hear her? And what if she screwed up and punched in the wrong code or what if...?

The decision was taken out of her hands.

He began walking towards her.

Chapter 2

Sara leapt towards the lock, the clog clattering uselessly onto the floor. Her fingers were slick with sweat, they slid over the tiny metals numbers. 7135. She grabbed the handle, swung it down and shouldered the door. Nothing. The door juddered in it's place but the lock remained engaged.

Closer and closer and.... C'mon! Concentrate! 7135.

This time, it worked. The door swung open and she scrambled through. Behind her, the footsteps were getting louder and louder. For one suicidal second, she paused and looked back. Just as the door swept back into place with a metallic click , he slammed into it. But the lock held. Sara heard him swear and kick the door. And then footsteps walking away.

How long did she stand there, looking at the closed door? Suddenly, she realised that she'd been holding her breath. She let it go in a rush; huge, racking sobs that tore from her with the relief and, alone in this corridor, she covered her face with her hands and cried. As quickly as it started, she stopped. Some long-buried, scarcely-used survival instinct was kicking in, reminding her that she was not safe yet. Sara raised her head, sniffed deeply and wiped both palms across her cheeks, to smear the tears away.

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She listened carefully. Nothing. Good! And yet, a feeling of foreboding was coming over her. She just couldn't put her finger on it... She looked around, rotating slowly like a lighthouse, scrutinising the familiar corridor. Something's wrong, she thought, what is it? There were the bags of dirty linen, the boxes containing half-litre bags of saline infusion, a broken drip stand.... All normal, no-one's hiding, so what's wrong?

As icy water trickled down her spine, she knew. Too quiet, much too quiet. She started walking slowly towards the intensive care unit. No beeps of machines, no voices, just silence. Something was very badly wrong.

In slow motion, Sara walked towards the double doors into the intensive care unit. Silence. She reached out, pressing her fingertips against the laminate sign that requested all visitors to ring for a nurse before entering. She pushed and the doors gently swung open.

Nothing but darkness. Sara clenched her jaw together and swallowed heavily. This can't be happening, she thought, it must be a dream. It's all a dream. And yet, she could feel the cold floor under her bare feet and smell the disinfectant in the air.

"Hello" she called out, her voice croaky and shaky. "Is there anyone there?" Her voice echoed across the room before resonating into silence. She swore softly to herself and then stepped back allowing the doors to close.

"Well, what's Plan B?" she asked herself.

"Go to the nearest ward" she answered.

Sara retraced her steps to get to the passageway that would lead her to the main part of the hospital. She passed by the code-locked door, giving it a wide berth and a nervous glance. It was still closed. Still quiet. Then she walked away.

Later, Sara would reflect back at the irony of how she was *just* thinking that she was now safe, when she heard a primal roar behind her. At the instant she turned around, mind numb with terror, she saw the locked door explode with a deafening crash. Sara screamed, hands over her ears then she looked up. The door had swung open, its lock bust and hanging uselessly from the wood. And in the doorway, a tall and imposing silhouette with an axe in his hand. For a split-second, they stared at each other and then the stranger smiled.

Sara screamed "Nooo!", as she spun about and started to run. Her legs moved spastically, unable to get any speed and she clawed at the wall to get some purchase and propel herself. Finally, she was running, screeching hysterically for help. She could hear him running behind her. The sound made her scream louder and louder. He was

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getting closer and closer. A monstrous weight slammed into her back, knocking her off her feet. He held her in a rugby tackle, huge arms clamped round her thighs. They slammed together onto the floor, his weight crushing her and their momentum forced them against the wall opposite. Sara banged her head against the skirting board. Momentarily stunned, she was powerless to resist as he flipped her over onto her back, then, on all-fours, straddled her body. She struggled briefly but he held her wrists in an iron-tight grip above her head. She collapsed limply back onto the floor and looked at him. He was smiling triumphantly down at her, dark brown eyes glinting.

So close and yet so far, she thought. I wonder if it'll hurt.

They stayed locked in the same position for what seemed like an eternity. It was enough to give Sara some time to recover. She became aware of the continuing silence beyond the thumping of her pulse. She could feel the trickle of blood worming its way down her forehead. She wrinkled her brows to make it change direction away from her eyes. She could feel his warm breath on her cheek and the dankness of her own clothes. She looked down. Her scrubs were stained purple across her hips, legs and stomach. Blood. Of course, she thought, as she caught the scent of copper in the still air. His clothes were saturated. Why else would you wear black?

Suddenly he shifted, grabbing both of her wrists within his left hand. Sara felt curiously calm and distant. Slowly, he stroked her cheek, as gentle as a lover would.

"Now then, my lovely," he murmured, "Why did you run away from me? You should know better than that."

Sara kept quiet but could feel the adrenalin flooding through her body again. She made a conscious effort not to tense up.

"Cat got your tongue," he smirked, "I warned you what would happen, so don't try and look innocent now. You brought all this on yourself."

"I don't understand."

For a split second, his grip tightened and his face twisted. Uh oh. Sara shrank back onto the floor, waiting for the attack but it didn't come. Finally, he spoke again, picking his words deliberately.

"Why do you do this? Why do you wind me up, time and time again? It's only you that suffers, but you just can't keep your big mouth shut!" The last part was shouted as he started to lose his temper. Sara whimpered and tears pooled in her eyes. He breathed heavily as he regained control, then he caressed her face again, his fingers gently stroking downwards to her neck. He looked wistfully, almost tenderly down at

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her.

"I should have done this years ago!"

His fingers gripped tightly around her throat, all his weight suddenly pressing down on her neck. She gasped convulsively and thrashed, as she pitifully tried to buck him off. Already, her vision had black dots scattered over it and her lungs screamed out, with a searing pain, desperate to pull oxygen in. The panic was overwhelming.

In a corner of her mind, she realised that she was doing this all wrong. She couldn't fight him *like this*. The next instant, her knee connected with his groin in a satisfying thud. The effect was immediate. He doubled up, eyes bulging, whining like a dog, still holding onto her neck and wrists but loosely. She clawed in a breath and before he had chance to recover, pulled her hands free and pushed her thumb into his eye socket. He sprang completely away from her with a high-pitched scream. Sara scrambled onto her front, pushed herself up and was running before her feet hit the ground. She'd only covered a few yards when she heard him bellow and swear. Oh Christ. At that moment, she spotted the fire-extinguisher propped in its wall bracket, only a few feet away on her left. Acting on instinct, she reached out and grabbed it. Its weight and her momentum carried it through, swinging in a huge arc. Sara saw the fleeting look of realisation in the stranger's bloodshot eye but it was too late to stop it. She hit him on the left side of his face and distinctly heard the sound of fracturing bone. His head snapped back and he slumped to the ground.

For a while, Sara stood there trembling, watching his inert body. Minutes passed, then she leaned down and placed the extinguisher gently on the floor. All the time, she kept watching him but she knew he wouldn't move. It wasn't Hollywood. His jaw was obviously broken, the skin swelling dramatically and already a deep shade of purple. On the chin, the skin had split but most of the blood was pooling from his mouth. Perhaps, he bit his tongue, thought Sara, as she watched his chest rise and fall steadily. Alive but deeply unconscious. Good. Wearily, she slumped against the wall. Her mind was numb. She couldn't feel relieved, upset, anything. She couldn't think. It was instinct again that propelled her off the wall and towards the nearest ward. Along the way, she glimpsed her reflection in a window. Red hair hanging limply against her white face. Big staring eyes and blood-streaked scrubs. She almost didn't recognise herself.

The first ward that she came to was F4 - vascular surgery. A ward inhabited by

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many limbless people, amputation being the last chance against raging pain and gangrene. Sara halted in the doorway, desperate for this to be over but vividly remembering what had happened in the intensive care unit. She didn't want to hope too soon. And then, one of the night nurses appeared from a side ward. Tears of relief flooded down Sara's cheeks. She was safe.

The night nurse saw the figure out of the corner of her eye and turned to face her, thinking it was one of the patients wandering. She visibly flinched and started to back away as she saw Sara clearly. This person was definitely not a patient. She looked around for the other night nurse for help but she was nowhere to be seen. Turning back to Sara, the nurse could now see that the intruder was just a woman, crying. Her fear abated a little although she didn't come any closer.

"Are you OK? Who are you?"

The crying magnified, her whole body shaking until she collapsed to her knees, face buried in her hands. The ward nurse's natural compassion overcame her nervousness and she came closer and put a hand on Sara's shoulder.

"Shush, sweetie; everything's going to be OK. Just tell me what's happened." Sara raised her face and finally spoke, in a broken, low whisper.

"We need help. You need to phone the police."

Chapter 3

Only the faint glow from the full moon through the windows gave any indication that it was still night-time. The ward was as busy as it was during the day. The arrival of the two constables had been muted but it was enough to get the attention of some insomniac patients. The curious murmurings had spread rapidly round the ward and when the policeman returned, pale and grim-faced and barking requests into their radios, the excitement and speculation built. Any deviation from the monotony of hospitals was welcome. So by the time, the plain-clothed police arrived, most of the patients were sat up in bed, drinking ups of tea and gossiping. The night-nurses on the adjacent wards flitted in and out, some helping out, others just nosy.

Amid all this chaos and noise, sat a hunched figure, wrapped in a cream blanket. Sara stared blankly at the wall in front of her, looking at it but not seeing. She felt as though some-one had pulled a switch and turned her off. She was vaguely aware of some-one pulling the blanket around her shivering shoulders - that was nice - and of a cup of very sweet tea being placed in her hands - not so nice, it was quite sickly and it burnt her tongue - but that was all. Yes, people were talking to her but it didn't seem to matter if she didn't reply, so she didn't. She just sat and stared and waited.

Detective Inspector Niall Jacobs strode briskly down the hospital corridor. He loathed the insidious smell; it reminded him of his wife dying 8 years ago. He'd long since come to terms with that, but the smell still rocketed him straight back to those endless days of watching her fade away. He shuddered, which dispelled the memories but also sent a pain shooting through his head. He'd known that he'd regret that extra tumbler of whisky before bed but it had been like nectar. Ah well. As he arrived onto ward F4, an officer sprang from a nearby door.

"Morning, Sir."

Niall grimaced at the lack of social consideration. He equated hospitals with churches.

"Keep it down, constable, we're in a hospital not a pub. There are people trying to sleep." And then he noticed all the pyjama-clad bodies milling around, chatting.

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"Good God, aren't these people supposed to be ill! No wonder waiting lists are so long. The NHS is full of slackers!" Just then, Niall caught sight of the pale young woman sat in the ward office.

"That's her, I presume?" he said, nodding his head in Sara's direction.

In the harsh fluorescent light, the purple bruising on her face and neck was vivid. She looked small and fragile and if Niall hadn't known differently, he'd have said that she was 15 years old. While the constable related everything that had happened so far, he watched her. She stared fixedly ahead the whole time; she didn't even blink. Niall knew he'd have to tread carefully with her. As the constable finished, Niall gave his burgeoning beard a thoughtful stroke.

"I think it's time I had a look, don't you."

The hospital was starting to swell with people as the scenes-of-crime team and police went about their routine tasks. Preliminary interviews, photographs, fingertip searches - it was business as usual.

Sara was vaguely aware of a woman entering the office. She probably said who she was but Sara didn't listen. Still, the rhythmical lilt of her voice was relaxing. Blah, blah, blah. Eventually, the woman gave up and just there quietly next to her. Niall entered the small office next. He smiled warmly at Detective Constable Gillian Reynolds; he had a good little team set up for this. He worked with her recently on a domestic abuse case that had escalated to murder. She was hard-working, clever, made a cracking cup of coffee and was very bawdy after only half a pint. Gillian grinned back at him, gestured towards Sara with a nod, then frowned and shook her head. Niall caught the meaning. The young woman still hadn't said anything. He closed the door, oblivious to the claustrophobic atmosphere and sat down. He leaned forward and took her cold, limp hands in his.

"Hello Ms Howarth, I'm Detective Inspector Jacobs. How are you feeling?" How do you think I'm feeling, you idiot, she thought, how would you feel? She gazed disinterestedly at him, noting that he had a battered, weathered face but looked nevertheless quite jolly. As if he found the most absurd things funny. He looked kind and patient too. He had the scent of cigars lingering on him and reminded Sara of an eccentric biology teacher she had for her A-levels. Maybe she should speak to him. Niall felt slightly encouraged by the spark of light in her pale blue eyes.

"If you're feeling up to it, I need to ask you a few questions. Is that OK?"

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She nodded her head slowly.

"Can you tell me exactly where you left your attacker?"

Oh God. Sara felt a prickle of fear crawl over her skin.

"He's gone, hasn't he? He's escaped!" she shouted, leaping up, eyes darting towards the door. For a split second, she considered making a run for it but then again, where would she go? Niall grabbed her arms and steadied her back in the chair, all the time shushing her as if she were a baby. He chewed on his bottom lip as he deliberated his next words.

"Well, I went to the corridor that *I thought* you meant, only there's nothing there. No sign of any attack. No broken door, nothing, no-one."

Well, that was a sucker-punch. Sara stared at him for what seemed an eternity, feeling the initial sickness being replaced by a wave of irritation. Bloody incompetent idiots. Can no-one do their jobs round here? Do I have to do everything myself?

"You obviously went to the wrong place" she said. The air of hostility was unmistakable. Niall felt taken aback by this. He hadn't expected that kind of attitude from some-one as meek-looking as her. Interesting.

"I don't think....." Niall started to say but Sara stood up and brushed past his knees. She stood, hand on the door handle.

"Then I suppose I'll have to show you," she interrupted. Niall paused then gave a broad smile.

"Splendid idea. If you're sure you're up to it." Sara gave a withering glance in reply.

"Marvellous!"

5:15 AM. It was still dark outside and a light frost had formed on the parked cars when Sara led the small group back through the hospital corridors. She was chewing her thumbnail and kept looking nervously around. There's nothing to be scared of, she told herself, nothing can happen.

As she approached the place where *he* was, she slowed suddenly. Niall and Gillian lurched to stop themselves crashing into her. She looked round with trepidation, now unwilling to turn the corner. The two police officers smiled encouragingly. It just looked feigned to Sara. She sighed then turned the corner.

Sara would later admit to not being particularly surprised that the corridor was empty.