



L. A. KENT
presents

Chapter Two

**FALLEN
KESTREL**

The Marazion murders

Chapter Two

Mayhem. Like ice fracturing on a frozen pond the network of blocked roads spread out from Marazion. With the main-line service from London Paddington to Penzance terminating at St Erth, passengers were being transferred to buses, which were swelling the excessive Bank Holiday weekend traffic. Gridlock.

Tailbacks rapidly grew stretching back along the A30 as far as Truro, and as people turned off in an attempt to cut through the city to try the A39 route west via Falmouth and Helston. the centre ground to a halt and the fractures spread out even further towards St Austell, Newquay and Bodmin heading for Devon.

And of course one irony was, that the very people needing to reach the scene to clear it - and thus the railway line - were themselves stuck in traffic. Finally, somebody on high released the funds to authorise the use of the police helicopter and it was duly dispatched to rescue the forensics team from the A30 at Scorrier. So when Detective Inspector Amber Bates and Detective Sergeant Fiona Sinclair arrived, they were. as Amber pointed out, very late to the party.

They pulled over and parked on a scrubby grass verge on the side of the A394 which runs parallel to the railway line

at this point, between Penzance and Helston. Standing at the edge of the woods, where the path of St Michael's Way emerged to cross the road and head northwards, stood a gleaming vintage Triumph motorcycle.

'Nice bike,' said Amber admiringly, locking the car. The two women followed the path southwards, onto the boardwalk and into the woods. The temperature dropped sharply as they entered the tunnel of overhanging trees, losing the direct sunlight. Soon they could make out the shining railway tracks straight ahead, bright beyond the gloom of the wood.

'Creepy place, don't you think?' Amber asked.

'Aye ma'am,' Fiona replied.

At the end of the boardwalk they reached a stile and clambered over onto the side of the railway line. To their right, westwards, a group of white protective-suited individuals were opening metal boxes and assembling gear. Normal. But what was not normal to Amber, was that they were totally ignoring a man dressed in motorbike leather trousers and a filthy torn T shirt, who, unbelievably, was filming the trackbed with his mobile phone. He was tall with shoulder length blonde hair and a muscular torso.

'What the...?'

Before Amber could finish the thought a second man emerged from the woods to the south to join the first. This one was black, equally tall and even more muscular, clad in dusty heavy-duty canvas work-pants and a grubby T shirt. Both looked as if they had just survived an explosion in a cement factory.

'What is this, crime scene tourism?' Amber muttered before raising her voice to bellow: 'Oi! You! Virgil Fucking Flowers!'

Fiona smiled, recognising the allusion to a character from John Sandford's American crime thriller series, a particular favourite of her father. *Oh boy*, she thought, *this is going to be good*, hurrying to catch up with the long-legged DI who was bearing down on the two men. At the sound of shouting the blonde man turned from the track and lowered his phone. When the incensed inspector reached him ready for a confrontation, she was disarmed by the man's sad but beautiful smile, his sapphire blue eyes and his hand extended in greeting. Reaching the awkward trio Fiona spoke quietly.

'Phil, Luke, great to see you both, but terrible shame about the boy.'

'Wha.. at? You know these clowns?' Amber spluttered.

'Yes ma'am. Meet Detective Sergeant Luke Calloway and Detective Chief Inspector Félipe Treloar,' she indicated the black man, then the blonde. 'Guys, meet our new DI, Amber Bates.'