

Chapter 6 *Blood on their hands*

Grant called Logan at home early the next morning.

‘I’ve found someone who knows Ian Ross,’ he said. ‘He’s called Major James Innes. He said he’ll meet you at the Royal Scots Club at eleven o’clock this morning. Ask for him at the main office and they will tell you where to find him.’

‘Thanks, Grant.’

At a quarter to eleven Logan was walking down Queen Street in the New Town. The weather had become very cold. Logan was wearing a thick coat, a scarf and a hat. Her nose was red with the cold. She kept her hands in her pockets and her head down against the wind.

The Royal Scots Club was on the other side of the Queen Street Gardens in Abercromby Place. The club was a meeting place for a lot of people, not just old soldiers. There was a restaurant and a bar, meeting rooms and also a number of bedrooms where people could stay. It was a sort of hotel as well as a club.

Major Innes was waiting for Logan in a quiet room near the main office. He was sitting in an armchair in front of a warm fire. He was about sixty years old with short white hair and a white moustache. He was wearing a dark blue jacket and an army tie.

‘Good morning, Inspector,’ he said. ‘Your sergeant told me you wanted some information about Ian Ross.’

‘Yes, Major. How well did you know Ross?’



‘Very well. He was one of my men for a number of years.’

‘Well, I’d like to know anything you can tell me about him,’ said Logan.

‘He was a good soldier, a very good soldier,’ said Major Innes. ‘He always did what I asked. He was intelligent and he was strong.’

‘Were you together for a long time?’ asked Logan.

‘About four or five years.’

‘Where?’

‘I’m sorry, Inspector,’ said Major Innes. ‘I can’t give you that sort of information. You see, we were in the SAS. We are not allowed to talk about where we have been and what we were doing.’

Logan sat back in her armchair and looked at the major. The SAS were some of the best soldiers in the British

Army. They often worked in very dangerous places, sometimes inside countries that were not at all friendly to Britain. The SAS knew the meaning of danger. They were hard men.

‘I didn’t know Ross was in the SAS,’ said Logan quietly.

The fire was very warm but Logan felt cold. She thought for a moment. Then she spoke: ‘Major, I must tell you why I’m here. I’m looking for the person who killed Alex MacLennan. You’ve probably read about his murder in the papers.’

‘Yes, Inspector,’ said the Major.

‘Well, Ian Ross and Alex MacLennan were good friends at one time. They had a restaurant business together.’

‘I see. And do you think Ross murdered MacLennan?’ asked the major.

‘Major, did Ian Ross kill anyone when he was in the army?’ asked Logan, not answering the major’s question.

‘Yes, Inspector, he did. A number of people. But you must remember that he was a soldier. It was his job. Soldiers only kill when they have to. They do not kill their friends.’

‘No,’ thought Logan. ‘Soldiers don’t kill their friends.’ But were Ian Ross and Alex MacLennan friends or not?

‘Thank you very much, Major. I’m sorry I’ve taken so much of your time.’ She stood up to go.

‘That’s all right, Inspector. I hope you find the right person. Ian Ross was a very good soldier and he killed people when he had to; but that doesn’t mean he is a murderer.’

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Logan left the Royal Scots Club. She walked back to Queen Street where she stopped a taxi. It took her back to

London Road. She got a cup of coffee and sat in her office. She looked out of the window. In the garden on the other side of the street some children were playing in the snow. They were laughing and shouting and building a snowman.

Logan's phone rang. She answered it.

'Logan,' she said.

'This is your favourite newspaper journalist speaking.' It was Tam's voice.

Logan smiled to herself. 'Hi, Tam!' she said. 'If you're phoning about the MacLennan murder, I'm afraid I haven't got anything for you.'

'That's OK, Jenny,' said Tam, 'because I could have something for you.'

Logan pulled her notebook out of her bag.

'What is it, Tam?'

'How much do you know about Donald Johnstone?'

'Well, we know all about his business and his problems with the bank,' said Logan.

'Ah!' said Tam. 'Then you don't know that he nearly killed a man three years ago.'

'What!' Logan almost shouted into the phone. 'How do you know that?'

'Interesting, isn't it?' said Tam. 'Another journalist here at the *News* is working on the MacLennan murder. He was talking to someone who knows Johnstone and this story came out.'

'Go on,' said Logan.

'Well, I don't know if this is true, but anyway . . . you know Johnstone buys and sells used cars.'

'Yes,' said Logan.

‘Well, three years ago a man called Neil Erskine came to Johnstone. Erskine said he had three BMWs to sell. He told Johnstone that he had an expensive taxi company for rich business people. He was buying some new cars for the company and he wanted to sell the old ones.’

Logan could see what was coming.

‘How much of the story was true?’ she asked.

‘You *are* good at your job, Jenny,’ he laughed. ‘Well, he wanted to sell three BMWs, but nothing else was true.’

‘But Johnstone believed him?’ said Logan.

‘Yes. He bought the BMWs, and then about a week later the police came round and took all three of them away. They weren’t Neil Erskine’s at all. Two of them were from the south of England and one was from Liverpool.’

‘And where was Neil Erskine?’ asked Logan. But she knew the answer.

‘Gone,’ said Tam.

‘So what happened?’ asked Logan.

‘Well, Neil Erskine wasn’t his real name. His real name is Neil Gordon and he’s from Glasgow. But Johnstone didn’t know that. Anyway, about a year later Johnstone was over in Glasgow doing some business. He was in a pub and . . .’

‘He saw Neil Gordon,’ said Logan.

‘Right again,’ said Tam. ‘Well, Johnstone followed him home. Later that week he went back with three of his friends. Neil Gordon spent the next three months in hospital. And now, three years later, he still can’t walk very well.’

‘He didn’t tell the police about Johnstone.’

‘No, he didn’t. If the police found out about the cars . . .’
Tam stopped speaking.

'I see what you mean,' said Logan.

She said nothing as she thought about Johnstone. She knew that he got angry very quickly. But she didn't know that he could do something like this.

'Are you still there?' asked Tam.

'Oh! Sorry, Tam,' she said. 'Look, thanks very much. What you've told me is a real help. You journalists have some very interesting friends.'

Tam laughed. 'I'll speak to you later,' he said.

'Bye,' said Logan and put the phone down. Tam's news about Johnstone was interesting, but what could she do with it? It didn't mean Johnstone was a murderer. But now Logan was sure he could kill, if he wanted to.

She looked out of the window. The children's snowman was finished and snowballs were flying through the air.

She let different ideas run through her head. After a time one idea stayed there and she thought about it very carefully.

Some time later Logan heard the one o'clock gun and Sergeant Grant put his head round the door.

'Come in, Grant,' she said. 'Tell me what you think of my idea.'

It took Logan about twenty minutes to tell Grant what she wanted to do. Then they got everything ready. After that Logan phoned Alice MacLennan and told her that she would like to come round and see her again.

She stood up and turned to Grant.

'Get three officers and I'll see you in about half an hour,' she said.