

## Chapter 5    *Screams in the night*

I was asleep, but my head was full of pictures and stories. I was dreaming about double basses and violinists and parties on the beach. Simon was in my dream. Our conductor was in it. So was my old teacher, playing a double bass on the sand. Then I heard a different sound. Somebody was shouting. No, it was worse than that. Somebody was screaming, screaming very loudly. I opened my eyes. I woke up. It was five o'clock in the morning.

Somebody screamed again. And again. And again. This time I wasn't dreaming.

I got out of bed. I put on a T-shirt and some jeans and went out of my room. Doors were opening on the left and the right. Adriana came out of her room. She ran up to me. She was half asleep, still in her night-dress. 'What is it?' she asked sleepily. 'What's going on?'

'I don't know,' I answered.

Martin Audley (a trumpet player) came up to us.

'Who screamed?' he asked.

'Nobody knows,' I told him. 'But it sounded terrible.'

There was another scream. It came from outside.

We ran back into my room and looked out of the window, down at the street. There was a police car there, some people, more and more people. And something else.

'Come on,' I said. We got the lift to the ground floor. When it stopped we ran out of the hotel and pushed to the front of all the people.

Marilyn Whittle, the harp player, was already there. Her face was white and her eyes were large and round.

'Look! Look!' she said. She was pointing in front of her. She screamed again.

We looked. She was pointing at the person at her feet. It was Frank Shepherd. His mouth was open. There was blood all over his head.

Martin spoke first. 'My God!' he said. 'He's dead!'



For a few minutes nobody did anything. It was like a moment from a bad film. I looked around me. Candida Ashley-Morton was there. Her face was white.

‘Oh, oh, oh no,’ she was saying, and then she turned and walked back into the hotel.

We knew that we couldn’t sleep. We didn’t know what to do. But the hotel manager was a nice person. He opened the bar – at half past five in the morning. We sat there. We were all asking the same questions. What happened? How did Frank die? Did he fall from his room?

We heard another police car. A man came into the bar. We stopped talking.

‘Good morning,’ he said. ‘My name is Portillo, Inspector Portillo.’ His voice was cold. So were his eyes. But I also thought, ‘He’s very good-looking with his dark hair and those eyes’. Then I felt bad because of Frank.

‘Now, please listen everybody,’ the policeman said. ‘Mr Shepherd is dead. We can’t change that. So go to bed. We’ll talk tomorrow – well, I mean later today.’ His English was very good.

Outside it was getting light. I was lying on my bed, thinking about Frank. I was trying not to see the blood and his eyes, open and dead. I was trying not to, but I couldn’t stop. Someone knocked on my door. I got up and opened it. It was Simon.

‘Hello,’ he said.

‘Hi. Isn’t it terrible?’

‘Yes,’ he said. ‘Poor Frank.’

‘Where were you?’ I asked. ‘After the concert? Where were you last night?’

‘I went to a bar,’ he said.

‘Why?’ I asked.

‘Why? Why? What a stupid question. For a drink.’

‘What did you do then?’ I asked.

‘Questions, questions! Why all these questions?’ His voice was different now.

‘What did you do then?’ I asked again.

‘I went to another bar.’ He wasn’t smiling now.

‘Why didn’t you tell me?’ I said. ‘I needed you.’ I was thinking of Frank’s body again. ‘You didn’t come to my room when you got back.’

‘Is that a question or a statement?’

‘I don’t know. Come on, Simon, where were you?’ I didn’t want to ask all these questions but I couldn’t help it.

‘All right. All right,’ he shouted. ‘Look, I went to a few bars, OK? I had a lot to drink. A lot. I walked back to the hotel very late. About three in the morning. When I got here I went up to my room quickly. I wasn’t feeling very well, you see. All those drinks . . .’

‘Were you with someone else?’

‘Haven’t you listened to me?’ Now he was really angry. I didn’t understand it.

‘Oh Simon, I’m sorry,’ I said. ‘I’m being stupid. It’s just, well, you know . . .’

‘Yes,’ he said. He was quieter now. ‘It’s been a difficult night, a difficult morning.’ He smiled at me. He kissed me. But there was something wrong. Something wasn’t quite right.

‘I’m going to go back to my room,’ he said. ‘I need a shower. See you later.’ He walked out of the room without another word.

I looked at the closed door. I thought about his words, about his answers to my questions. And then I thought, ‘Why isn’t he telling me the truth?’