

Part Four

Bella Osborne

Ottercombe Bay

Shaken and Stirred



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Ottercombe Bay – Part
Four: Shaken and Stirred

Аннотация

Escape to the Devon coast, with Part Four of a brand-new four-part serial from the author of Willow Cottage. Daisy Wickens has returned to Ottercombe Bay, the picturesque Devon town where her mother died when she was a girl. She plans to leave as soon as her great uncle's funeral is over, but Great Uncle Reg had other ideas. He's left Daisy a significant inheritance – an old building in a state of disrepair, which could offer exciting possibilities, but to get it she must stay in Ottercombe Bay for twelve whole months. With the help of a cast of quirky locals, a few gin cocktails and a black pug with plenty of attitude, Daisy might just turn this into something special. But can she ever hope to be happy among the ghosts of her past? Authors and readers love Bella Osborne's gorgeous novels: 'I really enjoy Bella Osborne's books' – Katie Fforde 'An absolutely glorious read full of laugh out loud moments and beautifully observed characters who spring to life on the page' Phillipa Ashley 'A warm and engaging story with relatable characters who will worm their way into your heart. A great read!' – Talli Roland 'Loved it! Believable characters, a sweetly told, lovely story... a great read' – Jane Lovering 'Romance, comedy, and mystery abound in this delightful British novel' – I Read That

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Ottercombe Bay

Part Four
BELLA OSBORNE
avon.

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Dedication

For my mum – thank you.

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Chapter One

Daisy was standing on the cliff top watching the small boat carry Guillaume further out to sea. The wind cut through her coat making her shudder. She had a bad feeling about this. What should she do?

She took a deep breath. Guillaume had been a slippery character in the past but he'd never been in any serious trouble. There were a few cash and carry fiddles, but she had no reason whatsoever to suspect he was up to no good now. Daisy felt a little better for this thought process. Perhaps she just needed to go and have a large glass of wine and forget about it. Yes, that was exactly what she would do. Another gust of night air gave her the nudge she needed to go home. It was times like this she missed her old motorbike.

She had a long chat to the man in the fish and chip shop whilst he explained the secret to his excellent fish and chips, and she did a good impression of someone rapt by the deep-frying process whilst her brain continued to mull over the situation with Guillaume. If it was some big romantic gesture then what on earth could it be that required a small motorised boat to be out on a choppy sea?

Walking home her phone beeped. For a moment she hoped it was a text from Guillaume saying he was back, but it was just a silly game demanding attention. But next to the game app was the

Find My Phone app and it was calling to her. She had Guillaume's phone set-up; well, assuming he still had the same phone and it still worked. She slowed her pace, clicked the app and hoped it would show he was in Weymouth. A small dot started to flash. The small dot was way offshore and it wasn't moving.

The wind was getting up now and she knew the impact that would have on the sea. Whatever her guess as to why Guillaume had taken the boat out, the fact remained he was now way offshore in a tiny boat in the dark with little sailing skills and a possible storm brewing. Daisy fumbled with her phone as her brain fumbled with her dilemma. Eventually she called Jason and proceeded to offload all her concerns in one long diatribe.

'Daisy, stop. One thing at a time. Is Guillaume in danger?'

'He might be.' She bit her lip when she thought about it. The non-moving dot in the English Channel might simply mean he had broken down. She didn't want any harm to come to him, especially if he was off doing something romantic for her when she had no intention of reigniting their relationship.

'Is this a lifeboat call out?'

'I don't know, I don't think so,' said Daisy, feeling overwhelmed by confusion.

'Right, I'll meet you at Locos in five minutes. Okay?'

'Okay, thanks.' Feeling somewhat relieved she ended the call and flicked up the Find My Phone app. The dot was still stuck in the middle of the blue mass of ocean but it was no longer in range. Perhaps the boat's engine had failed and he'd drifted out

there. Maybe Jason was right, perhaps it was a lifeboat call out.

She stopped for a moment and looked around her. She wasn't sure why but she had an odd sensation someone was watching her, but there was nobody there. At least she couldn't see anyone. It was dark now and the wind was starting to whistle around the town, which meant the sea would be starting to cut up rough. She put her head down and strode off towards Locos.

Jason and Daisy could see each other approaching from different directions. Jason swung the small patrol car into the kerb and jumped out.

'Are you okay?' he asked.

'Yeah, I'm just confused and I don't want to get anyone into any trouble.'

'Daisy, if someone has done something against the law that is their issue not yours. Has someone done something illegal?' Jason's expression was cheerily expectant.

'I don't know,' said Daisy shaking her head. 'The thing is, Guillaume wanted me to hire him a boat, which he said was for him to see the coastline, but I thought it was for us to go out and watch the sunset and ...' She paused. She didn't need to reveal anything else about what her expectations may have been about the evening. 'But anyway, he went on his own, which just seems an odd thing to do and the weather isn't great and he doesn't know much about boats.' She ran out of steam.

'He doesn't have a criminal record. I checked,' said Jason. Daisy raised her eyebrows. 'Always best to be proactive.'

‘I don’t know if he’s up to anything but I do know he appears to be stranded in the English Channel.’

‘Let’s put the lifeboat call out. It’s getting rough out there; he is in potential danger, which is enough to get a crew in the water. I’ll make sure I’m in the boat so if there’s anything untoward going on I can step in. We’ll get him back safe. Okay?’

‘Thanks, Jason.’ Daisy was swamped with relief. She may not want to rekindle her romance with Guillaume but she certainly didn’t want anything to happen to him.

‘Let me get the last known coordinates of his phone from your app then you can stay here. I’ll be able to keep you posted. I promise.’

Jason quickly got what he needed from her mobile, handed it back and jumped back into the small patrol car like he was in a low-budget cop show. Daisy watched him go but already she knew she couldn’t sit in the bar and wait to hear from him, she needed to be on the beach. She wanted to make sure Guillaume was all right and felt overwhelmingly responsible for both letting him take the boat and for sending the lifeboat crew out after him. By the time she got to the beach the lifeboat was already in the water. She thought the beach was deserted until behind her she heard the crunch of pebbles as someone strode purposefully towards her.

‘Shit, I missed the shout,’ said Max, out of the darkness. ‘Tell me it’s not your idiot boyfriend in that bloody boat?’

Daisy bit her lip as she tried to form a sentence to rebuke his

comment but it simply wasn't possible. She winced.

'I knew I shouldn't have agreed to it. Bloody hell. I thought you said he was familiar with boats.'

'He said he was. But from the way he studied the motor I don't think he knows much about them.'

'So now he's risking three more lives, and for what? Some sightseeing trip?' Max looked around and then back at Daisy. 'I thought you were going with him?'

'So did I,' said Daisy, staring out at the ink-black water spitting out a white froth as it angrily pummelled the shoreline.

'What's going on?' said Max, spinning around like a clumsy toddler doing a pirouette.

'He's stuck in the middle of the sea and ... where are you going?' Daisy started to follow Max even though he was ignoring her and was marching back the way he'd come. 'Max!'

'You stay there, I'm just checking something out,' called back Max. Daisy jogged to keep up with him and as she drew level he shook his head. 'I see your listening skills haven't improved.'

'Nor have your manners.'

They both put their heads down against the wind and with the faintest of smiles battled on up to the headland. The wind on the top was fierce now and Daisy could feel panic rising as they neared the edge. Max stopped dead and Daisy almost bumped into him.

'Why is there a car parked there at this time of night?' Max was pointing to an ancient Astra estate car in the small car park.

They both looked around but there was nobody else about.

‘Is your boyfriend a crook?’ asked Max, setting off again.

‘He’s not my boyfriend and, no, he’s not a crook.’ They marched on in silence away from the bay following the coastal path towards the cove. Max slowed his pace.

‘What are we doing exactly?’ asked Daisy, raising her voice to be heard over the now howling wind.

‘Stop shouting. I’m following a hunch.’

Daisy grabbed his arm and spun him around. ‘Will you tell me what’s going on or at least what you think is going on.’

Max was looking annoyed, most likely at her volume. She lowered her voice and leaned closer. ‘Please,’ she added and let go of his arm.

Max strode further along the path and then beckoned her to join him. They were standing on the edge, above the cove, and Daisy looked uneasily down to the rocks below her.

‘The cove was where Pasco used to do his dodgy deals and his petty smuggling.’ Max indicated the cliffs in front of them with a thumb.

‘But Tamsyn said the cove isn’t safe because of all the rock falls and that’s why they closed the path off to stop you getting down there.’

‘Which makes it an ideal spot—’

‘—if you were up to something.’ Daisy finished the sentence.

She realised the implications. ‘Hang on a minute. You think Guillaume has been duped into something dishonest?’

Max pulled a face conveying his thoughts quite well. ‘Not duped, no.’

‘Who is jumping to conclusions now? You’ve met him a couple of times and now you think he’s the brains behind something illegal.’

‘I wouldn’t go that far. He didn’t strike me as a genius, bit of a jerk if you ask me. Actually a great big—’

‘Really? Is now the time to have this argument?’ Daisy had her hands on her slim hips.

‘Guess not,’ said Max lowering his voice.

Daisy walked forward and peered over the edge. Max grabbed her by the arm making her start.

‘Shit, Max, you nearly pushed me over.’ He still had a firm hold on her and her heart was racing and it wasn’t entirely because of the proximity of the cliff edge.

‘Look,’ said Max, pointing to the small patch of beach waiting to be swallowed by the approaching tide. ‘There’s someone down there.’

Daisy squinted. ‘I think there’s two people.’

Max guided her back from the edge and let go of her arm. ‘I’m going to sit it out and see who they are. You go home and I’ll call you.’

Daisy laughed. ‘Why does everyone keep sending me home like I’m some sort of silly little girl? I’m staying put.’ She folded her arms defiantly.

Max shook his head. She hoped he wasn’t going to argue with

her. He stepped away and for a moment she thought he was going to leave her there but instead he crouched down behind a nearby bush. Daisy joined him. 'They don't do this in James Bond,' she said, with a smile.

Time stretched on and there was no sign of anyone coming up from the cove. Perhaps they'd been mistaken; it could have been shadows playing tricks. Eventually her thighs started to burn so she sat down on the cold ground. She could no longer feel her fingers despite them being in her coat pockets. There had been no update from Jason but then she wasn't sure he would get a signal in the middle of the sea. The earlier excitement had waned and she was considering going home for a coffee; there wasn't anything she could do here and Jason would let her know if Guillaume was okay soon enough.

Then Max tapped her arm making her look up. He pointed rapidly past the bush. Daisy peered around the spikey plant to see if she could see anything. The tide had come in further and the beach was no longer visible in the cove.

Daisy repositioned herself and had another look down to where the sea was swirling ominously in the tight confines of the cliffs. 'There's nobody down there. Those people must have been washed out to sea or there was nobody there in the first place.' Daisy went to stand up but Max forcefully pulled her back down, making her land on her bum. She stifled the urge to yell because she could sense from Max all was not well.

Max put his hands up and mouthed 'sorry' and then pointed

forwards and down. Daisy squinted in the darkness but could see nothing and could only hear the wind whipping around her chilled ears. But then she saw something move. Two silhouettes were moving along where the slope had once led down to the small secluded cove. Her heart started to race. She tried to get a good look at them but it was too dark. She wondered who they could be and what they were doing on an unsafe cliff on a night like this, but most of all she wondered if they had any connection to Guillaume. She was very glad she wasn't on her own.

Chapter Two

Daisy and Max watched silently in the darkness as the two figures clambered over the barricade that was in place to stop people following the path down to the cove. They heard a yelp as one of them tripped.

‘It’s a woman,’ whispered Daisy, instantly feeling foolish for hiding behind a bush. ‘They aren’t criminals – they’ve been for a shag on the beach. And now we look like we’re dogging. Cocking hell, Max.’ She was immediately cross with Max for having stirred up her doubts about Guillaume and even angrier with herself for going along with it. This couple were clearly unconnected to whatever Guillaume was doing out at sea, which was most likely completely innocent.

Max put his finger to his lips and Daisy reluctantly fell silent. They watched the couple climb up the last few steps and stop to look out to sea. The man started speaking into a mobile phone and although they weren’t close enough to hear the conversation they could tell he was irate. It was oddly addictive spying on someone like this; she was fascinated by who this couple were and if nothing else it was taking her mind off the worry that she’d called the lifeboat out on a wild goose chase.

‘Now what?’ said Daisy, digging Max in the ribs.

‘Shh, I’m thinking.’

‘Then we could be here all night. I say we—’ But her sentence

was cut off by the sound of music. The blast of a Crazy Frog ringtone bellowed from Daisy's pocket as her mobile sprang into life.

'Hello?' she said, her voice hushed.

'Daisy, it's Jason. Guillaume is safe. Stay where you are. I can't give you any details but this is now part of a criminal investigation.'

Daisy was listening but she was also looking at the two faces looming over the bushes watching her and Max carefully. This close their features were clearer. Neither of them was smiling. Her heart started to pick up its pace, her mind swirled and her muscles tensed as panic took hold.

'Okay, thanks for your *help*. Bye.' She very much hoped Jason would pick up on the emphasis on help: her pitiful attempt to tell him she felt in danger. Max slowly stood up. It was some comfort he was at least level with the stern man looming over them. Max reached for Daisy's hand and pulled her upright, keeping tight hold of her, which caused something to zing in the pit of her stomach.

'Hi Buddy,' said Max sounding friendly. 'Sorry if we startled you.' He turned to Daisy. 'Come on, babe, let's go home.' He guided Daisy from behind the bush, gave a cursory nod at the other couple and walked towards the town.

Max put his arm around her and pulled her in closer to him and whispered. 'Just keep walking. Do what I do. Okay?'

His reaction was frightening her but the warmth of his body

close to hers was reassuring. ‘Okay,’ she said swallowing hard and trying to keep her breathing steady. She wanted to ask him what the hell was going on. She wanted to run. She wasn’t entirely sure why but something in her psyche was saying ‘RUN’ and it was hard to ignore.

Her heart was racing and the blood was thrumming loudly in her ears. She noticed Max, who was nearer the edge, had guided her to walk on the grass and off the pathway. It was more uneven underfoot but definitely safer should anyone have plans to push you over the edge. A furtive glance over her shoulder and Daisy saw the couple were following them. A knot of anxiety clenched in the pit of her stomach and despite all logic her instincts kicked in and she bolted.

Max lurched forward but it was too late, Daisy was already sprinting away. He heard the footsteps behind him and turned as the man was throwing a punch. Max dodged and the punch caught him in the shoulder knocking him off balance. Max stumbled backwards as more punches came his way. As he landed with a thump he expected to get a kicking but could see his assailant was now under attack from someone else. He blinked through the darkness. He couldn’t believe his eyes.

‘Dad?’ asked Max from his prone position as Pasco landed a second right hook on his assailant. Max’s mouth dropped open.

‘Get to Daisy, Max. She needs you,’ said Pasco, as he dodged the retaliating blows. The man was far younger than Pasco but for the moment they seemed evenly matched.

Max rolled over. Daisy was still running but the woman was in pursuit and was gaining on her fast. Max scrambled to his feet and set off at speed, taking to the path in a bid to catch up. Daisy wasn't looking back, she may not have known she was being chased. Why were they being chased at all? Who were these people and what the hell was that stupid French goon caught up in? Max pushed himself to run flat out in a bid to reach the woman before she reached Daisy.

Max was soon gaining on them. Daisy was nearly at the small car park and thankfully there were some streetlights but there was nobody else about. Ottercombe Bay at night was dead and there were no properties nearby. Max pulled his phone out of his pocket whilst still running but it was a difficult manoeuvre. He hit Jason's number and put it to his ear – it was really awkward to run like this.

'Answer the bloody phone, Jason.' His breathing was heavy as he watched Daisy disappear off the path and onto the main pavement into town. He expected the woman chasing her to follow but instead she stopped at a parked Astra and got inside. Max slowed for a second; Daisy was out of immediate danger. He filled his lungs with air but continued to jog along. The woman was obviously doing a runner, it had just looked like she was chasing Daisy because she was running in the same direction. The relief he felt was overwhelming.

He slowed to a walk and was considering running back to help Pasco or continuing after Daisy when Jason answered his call.

‘Jason, I’m up on the headland with Daisy, we’ve been attacked by two people and ... shit!’ Max shoved his phone back in his pocket and sprinted after the Astra now heading after Daisy and not out of town as he had expected it to. This running lark was tiring; he was fit but cars, even old Astras, went much faster.

The wind was gusting straight at him, which hindered his speed as he tried in vain to keep the car in his sights as it sped off, skidding slightly when it took a bend too fast, and disappeared from sight. He pushed himself to keep going but he simply couldn’t maintain this pace for much longer.

Max was considering stopping because he had no idea which way Daisy or the car had gone when he heard the sound of screeching tyres and scraping metal up ahead and it spurred him on. He turned the corner near the Mariner’s Arms and saw the car rammed up against the railings. He carried on running and the scene became clearer. The car had been stopped by a stinger, a belt of studs purposely thrown under the tyres to puncture them. Two police cars were in the pub car park. He turned his attention back to the road suddenly realising there were two armed officers shouting at him to get down. Max stopped, lay down and did exactly as he was told. His heart was thundering in his chest, and drawing in air was difficult when you were lying face down on tarmac.

‘Hang on, that’s Max,’ shouted Jason from nearby. ‘What are you doing?’ he added, approaching him. Max slowly rolled onto his side and looked up to see an automatic weapon pointing at

him and Jason next to the armed officer with his hands on his hips.

‘Hiya, mate,’ said Max, breathlessly. ‘The bloke you’re looking for is up on the headland fighting with Pasco.’

Jason got on his radio but someone more senior was already directing officers into a car and they screeched away. Jason helped Max to his feet and he watched as the woman was removed from the Astra, handcuffed and escorted to the other police car.

‘Where’s Daisy?’ asked Jason.

Max closed his eyes. That was going to be his question. ‘I don’t know.’

‘I need to sort things out here. Can you find her?’

Max nodded and set off towards Locos taking in big gulps of air as he walked. His mind was awash with questions. He had no idea what he’d witnessed, who those people were or where the hell all the armed police had sprung from. His only comforting thought was that Daisy had avoided a confrontation, but where was she now?

He took out his phone and dialled her number. It went to voicemail. He took a deep breath and started jogging. When he reached Locos he could see there were no lights on, which wasn’t a good sign, but he would go and check inside anyway. He slowed to a walking pace and checked all around the building. ‘Daisy!’ He knocked on the door but there was no reply. He was standing on the platform thinking through his next move.

A click behind him got his attention and for a second he expected to see the stern-looking man from the headland with a cocked gun. As he turned around the door of the carriage opened and a frightened-looking Daisy emerged, glancing around her like a startled animal.

Max had a million things running through his head that he wanted to say to her but instead he opted for pulling her into a hug and holding her tightly. He could feel her trembling. After a bit Daisy gently pushed him away.

‘What the cocking hell is going on?’ she asked.

‘I wish I knew. Come on, I’ll walk you home and we’ll get Jason to fill in the blanks in the morning.’ He needed to track Pasco down too and check he was all right but getting Daisy home was his priority and she didn’t need anything else to worry about right now.

Daisy locked up the carriage and they walked slowly across the car park giving Max a chance to fill her in on what had happened to the woman who had chased her whilst Daisy explained how she’d cut down a side street to get away. As they reached the sea wall they could see more police cars had appeared and there was a flurry of activity around the pub, which was lit up like Christmas.

‘Poor Monty, he won’t be happy about all this,’ said Daisy, turning to walk home.

‘I dunno, he’ll be charging them top dollar for fancy coffees. He’ll be raking it in.’

They neared Daisy's road and heard a car approaching behind them. As it went past they could see it was yet another police car. The car screeched to a halt, slammed into reverse and sped back towards them. Daisy and Max stopped walking and watched two officers leap from the vehicle.

'Max Davey?' said one of them.

'Yeah,' said Max, looking bewildered.

'Max Davey, I am arresting you on suspicion of being concerned in the supply of drugs under section 4 of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. You do not have to say anything, but it may harm your defence if you do not mention when questioned something you later rely on in court. Anything you do say may be given in evidence. Get in the car please, sir.'

'What?' said Max. The policeman opened the car door and gestured for Max to get in. 'Actually, nothing makes sense tonight. Let's go, boys.' Max shook his head and willingly got in the police car. One officer got in next to him, the other got in the driver's seat and they drove off leaving Daisy shivering on the pavement.

Chapter Three

When Daisy woke the next morning she lay there for a few minutes hoping it had all been a dream but if she was honest even her craziest dreams made more sense than the events of last night. As she was trying to order her thoughts the bedroom door opened and Aunt Coral came in with a cup of tea.

‘Morning, love. I’m not working today. I wondered if you’d give me a hand cutting the Buddleia back. Are you all right?’ she said, taking in Daisy’s glazed expression.

Daisy took the proffered tea. ‘Thanks and no, I’m not all right at all.’

Aunt Coral sat on the bed and Bug came and joined her (after three failed attempts to jump up Coral took pity on him and picked him up). She listened intently and nodded in the right places until Daisy had finished her story.

‘So Guillaume is safe because Jason saved him and Max saved you but he’s been arrested for supplying drugs. Is that right?’

She had hoped it would make a little more sense once she’d gone through it out loud but it still made no sense at all. Daisy snatched up her mobile and rang Jason’s home number, when there was no reply she tried his mobile but it went straight to voicemail. Daisy threw back the covers. ‘I need to see Jason. Perhaps he can explain everything.’ She wished somebody would. She headed for the front door hoping Tamsyn would know where

to find him, and then thought even popping next door in her pyjamas probably wasn't socially acceptable so she scurried back to put something else on.

Tamsyn also had no idea where Jason was so they decided to go to the police station together in Tamsyn's car. Daisy went through the events of the previous evening again, as much for herself as for Tamsyn. If she was voluntarily going into a police station she may be asked to make a statement and it would be nice if she had some understanding of what she had witnessed.

'Jason sent a text last night to say no *Doctor Who* because he was on an emergency. I just assumed it was an RTC. That's road traffic collision,' added Tamsyn proudly.

Daisy eyed her friend. 'This was no RTC.'

'I think you should turn yourself in,' said Tamsyn, her face deadpan.

Daisy blinked. 'What did I do?'

'You got Max to hire the boat that Guillaume had to be rescued from.'

Tamsyn had a point.

The police station where they were holding Max was a few miles away, gone were the days of one in every village. The car journey gave Daisy time to studiously inspect her fingernails.

When they got there Tamsyn made a big deal of making sure her car was parked properly in the space despite Daisy pointing out that being crap at parking wasn't actually an offence. Inside there were quite a few people but a distinct lack of anyone who

looked like a policeman.

‘Shall we ask for Jason?’ said Daisy, feeling unsure.

‘Or Max?’

‘I’m guessing they’d be more likely to send Jason out to the front desk to explain things to us.’

‘Oh, okay then,’ said Tamsyn, seemingly oblivious to the sarcasm.

Daisy joined what she hoped was the right queue and waited. Behind her she heard raised voices. It was one of those moments where you knew making eye contact could be a disaster but still something tells you that you have to look. She turned to see Pasco reversing through some double doors with Max poking him in the shoulder. ‘You think it makes everything else all right? What about the locket? Did you think I wouldn’t recognise it? Was it you who—’ Max stopped dead as he realised who his audience was.

Daisy was shaking as she looked from Max to Pasco. Her mouth had gone dry and she was struggling to make sense of what she’d just heard. She stepped out of the queue and walked right up to Pasco. ‘Did you steal my mother’s locket?’

Pasco turned to Max who was looking uncomfortable and raking his hands through his hair, which was even more messy than usual. He looked a state – tired, unshaven and still in yesterday’s clothes.

‘Daisy, let’s go somewhere and have a talk.’ Pasco rested his hand on her shoulder and she shrugged him off.

‘No, I think a police station is the perfect place to discuss a theft.’ She stood firm and stared him down.

Pasco’s eyebrows shot up. As if on cue Jason strode purposefully through the double doors.

‘Max, you are free to go but don’t go disappearing in case we want to check any facts.’ Max gave him a derogatory glare, which Jason didn’t seem to notice. ‘You too, Pasco.’

‘Hey, I’m innocent,’ said Pasco, hastily trying to usher everyone out of the police station.

‘See you later,’ said Jason, giving Tamsyn a little wave.

‘Stop,’ said Daisy, forcefully. ‘Jason, where is Guillaume?’

‘I’m off,’ said Max, putting a hand on the door. Nobody responded so he slunk out closely followed by Pasco.

‘Guillaume has been charged with possession of drugs with the intent to supply.’

‘Where is he?’ Daisy’s voice was gruff and implied she wanted to do him harm.

‘He’s not here. The criminal gang he was doing business with were being watched by a bigger police operation. The local force didn’t get much of a look in.’ Jason appeared thoroughly disappointed by this.

‘Right. Who were the people who chased me and Max?’

‘Guillaume was a middleman. He was meant to collect the drugs from another boat at sea and then pass them to those two at the cove. It was all a bit last minute; apparently the deal was meant to be next week but when they had a tip-off someone was

onto them they brought everything forward. Hence they picked the cove not realising it wasn't accessible.'

'You know Max had nothing to do with it.'

'Yeah, they still interviewed him for half the night because he hired the boat and the others weren't talking but Guillaume eventually came clean. He exonerated you of any wrongdoing too.'

'I should bloody well think so.'

'He admitted he only came here to set up the drugs handover.'

'Duped again,' said Daisy.

'Yes, well. I still have a bit to finish up here then I'm heading home. It's been quite a night.'

'If I wanted to bring charges for theft, do I speak to you?'

Jason's tired face registered some interest. 'You can. What and who are we talking about?'

'My locket and Pasco.'

Jason looked surprised. 'Do you have proof?'

'Not exactly but—'

'You know if it wasn't for Pasco keeping watch on you— Well, all I'm saying is if it hadn't been for Pasco stepping in to save you ...' His speech was speeding up and he looked agitated.

'Save me?' Daisy was sceptical.

'These people Guillaume is mixed up with are career criminals and the woman who chased you was carrying a knife.' Jason's usually jovial expression was beyond serious.

Daisy tried to take in what he'd said. 'A knife?'

Jason blinked slowly. 'If Pasco hadn't been keeping an eye on you ...'

'Pasco was watching me? What, like a stalker?'

'No. He was suspicious of Guillaume and he's been worried about you ... and Max too. He had quite a bit of useful information to impart, some of which we've been able to back up with CCTV footage. Anyway, I have already said far too much. But go easy on Pasco. I honestly think he's turned over a new leaf. And your lift is waiting.' He indicated Tamsyn's head peeping through the door.

'Thanks, Jason.' Daisy reached up and gave him a peck on the cheek.

Jason blushed slightly. 'Out or I'll have you arrested for assaulting a police officer.'

Armed with this new information Daisy scanned the street outside for Pasco but there was no sign of him or Max.

'Where've the others gone?'

'Pub, I think,' said Tamsyn.

'At this time in the morning? Come on, I need to talk to both of them.'

Unsurprisingly they found Max and Pasco in the first pub they came to. Neither looked pleased to see them walk in.

'Would you mind getting me a Diet Coke please, Tamsyn?' said Daisy, who was eager to speak to Max and Pasco alone. Tamsyn dutifully went to the bar and Daisy pulled up a chair.

'Daisy, I have had a shit night. Please can you have a go at

me later after I've had some sleep and bought some ear plugs?' asked Max.

Daisy ignored him. 'Pasco, where is my mother's locket?'

Pasco frowned and signalled to Max who put his hand in his pocket. Daisy could hardly believe her eyes when Max unfurled his fingers in front of her to reveal her locket. Daisy sobbed as she took it from him and clasped it tightly in both hands. The relief of being reunited with it was immense. She uncurled her fingers and stared at it. Every detail etched in her memory exactly how she remembered it and now it was safe again. Daisy sniffed and roughly wiped the tears from her eyes. Now wasn't the time for sentimentality, now was the time for angry accusations.

'Which one of you stole it?'

Pasco leaned forward to rest his elbows on his thighs and brought his hands together to create a steeple shape. 'I'm not certain it is stealing if you are taking back your own property.'

Daisy gave a hollow laugh but seeing the stony looks on both Pasco and Max's faces she stopped. 'What do you mean your property? This was my mother's.'

Pasco shook his head slowly and pursed his lips. 'That locket is a Davey family heirloom. It's been passed down through my family for generations. It's French.'

'I know,' said Daisy, feeling bewildered. She clutched the locket tighter between her fingers.

'I think one of my ancestors probably stole it during the French Revolution.' Pasco took a deep breath. 'I'm sorry I took it without

explaining. It looked like old Reg had left the window open and I thought I'd shut it to put off any passing thieves.' Daisy's eyebrows danced at the irony. 'I just saw the locket there on the cabinet and I knew it was the same one.'

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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