

DON'T WAKE UP



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Chapter one

It was the familiar sounds that awakened her. They were strangely comforting, even though her first instinct was to leap up in panic to see what her colleagues were doing. She heard instruments being placed on a steel tray. Monitors emitted regular beeps, sterile packages were torn open, and in the background there was the ever-present hiss of oxygen.

She could see the scene clearly in her mind and knew she must get up, but the pull of sleep was strong and her limbs felt too heavy to move. She couldn't remember climbing onto one of the unoccupied trolleys, but she must have done it at some time during the night to get an hour or two of sleep. Normally she would have been woken by a call from the red telephone, or the persistent screech of the transceiver. These urgent calls would normally have meant she was up and running even before her eyes were open. But this sleep had made her feel sluggish, and raising her heavy eyelids felt like unfolding thickened skin.

Bright light blinded her, her eyes watered and she had to squint against its glare. It was punishingly harsh and she could barely make out its outline. Confusion mixed with alarm alerted her to

her surroundings. She wasn't in a cubicle. They didn't have lights like this in her department; they were small overhead lamps that could be covered with the palm of a hand. *She wasn't in her own department; she was in theatre.* Why on earth was she here? Surely she hadn't wandered up *here* for a kip. *Think.* Had she helped out with a trauma? Had they been short of a pair of hands? It would be highly unlikely, but not inconceivable. She focused her eyes downwards, and then froze. She shivered violently as she saw her body covered in green theatre drapes. The sounds of the theatre were silenced, the rush of blood in her ears too noisy to allow her to hear anything else. Her arms were extended and held down with Velcro on the upholstered armrests. A blood pressure cuff was wrapped around her arm above her right elbow, and a pulse oximeter probe was attached to her middle finger. Yet it was the sight of the two large cannulas inserted in both forearms that scared her most. Orange needles meant aggressive fluid restoration, which in her world spelt shock.

The drip lines snaked up around metal IV poles and out of view to the bags of fluid. She could see the heavy bottoms of clear fluid bags suspended above, but could only guess at the fluid being transfused.

She focused lower, past the green drapes on her chest and abdomen, and then panicked as she saw her painted pink toenails raised in the air. Her thighs, she realised, were spread, her calves supported on knee troughs and her ankles held in stirrups – she was lying on a theatre table with her legs up. From her dry mouth and foggy mind she realised she had just woken not from a natural sleep, but one induced by anaesthesia.

‘Hello?’ she called to attract the attention of the person handling the instruments. The clatter of steel against steel went on uninterrupted; unnerved, she called louder, ‘Hello? I’m awake.’

Given the circumstances, she was amazed how calm she felt. She was frightened and anxious, but beneath this her professional knowledge allowed her to think through what might have happened as she lay waiting for an explanation

She’d finished her shift for the evening. Her memory retrieved her last conscious thought . . . Walking through the staff car park in her new floaty dress and pink shoes, to meet Patrick. This memory reassured her that she must have had an accident. Champagne and roses, she thought. That’s what he had promised her after her long day at work. Champagne and roses, and, if she had read him right, a marriage proposal.

Where was he now? Outside pacing a corridor no doubt, anxiously waiting to hear how she was. Ready to pounce on anyone who could give him an answer. Had she been knocked down, she wondered? A car pulling out too quickly, perhaps, that she hadn’t noticed in her eagerness to see Patrick’s car?

A vague recollection filtered through of tottering along in her impossibly high heels, chest stuck out, tummy pulled in to show off her figure to its best advantage in the new dress. And then a wave of dizziness which buckled her legs and slammed her knees to the ground, a pain to the crook of her neck, a pressure on her mouth, no air, gagging and then . . . nothing.

Gut-wrenching fear gripped, and her breathing turned ragged as she fought the panic. How seriously injured was she?



Was she dying? Was that why no one was around her? Had they simply left her here to die?

Her training and instincts kicked in. Primary survey. Do the checks. ABCDE. No, stay with ABC first. Her airway was clear. No oxygen mask or nasal cannula were attached to her. She was breathing spontaneously, and as she breathed in deeply she felt no discomfort. Circulation? Her heart was pounding hard and loud. She could hear it on a monitor close by. But why then were her legs spread? Was she bleeding? Pelvic fractures could be the most serious traumas. Big uncontrollable bleeders. But if that was the case, where were all the worried surgeons? Why hadn't they banded her pelvis and stabilised it?

'Hello, can you hear me?' she now demanded less pleasantly.

The sound of clanking instruments ceased. She moved her head gingerly and was not surprised to find head blocks and a neck collar holding her still. They had yet to rule out the possibility of a cervical spine injury. She began to seethe. Who the fuck was looking after her? She wanted to give him or her a piece of her mind. To allow her to wake up alone was bad enough, but for her to then find her head and arms strapped down and her legs stuck up in the air was an outrage. She could have done untold damage to herself if she'd panicked or ripped off the contraptions that were keeping her safe.

She could hear the sound of clogs moving towards her on the hard floor. Then, floating into her peripheral vision, she saw bluey-green material, someone wearing a surgical gown. She caught a glimpse of a pale neck and the edge of a white facemask, but the rest of the face – the nose and eyes – were above the bright lights, making it impossible for her to see properly.





She felt tears suddenly gather in her eyes and laughed harshly. 'I hate bloody hospitals.' Her visitor stayed still and silent, bringing fresh fear to her overactive mind. 'Sorry about the waterworks. I'm OK now. Look, just give me the facts. Life-threatening? Life-changing? I take it you know I work here, that I'm a doctor, so please don't give me the diluted version. I'd rather know the truth.'

'Nothing's happened to you.'

The voice jolted her, sounding like it came through a speaker system. She blinked in confusion. Was the person beside her speaking to her, or was someone speaking to her from behind an observation screen? Was she in the CT scanner room and not in a theatre? The voice belonged to a man, but not one she recognised. It was none of the surgeons she knew. She squinted up at the masked face. 'Are you the doctor or are they in another room? Are we in the scanner room?'

'I'm the doctor.'

Christ, her hearing was all wrong. He sounded like he was speaking beside her, yet the voice sounded distant, like a telephone voice. Why didn't he turn off the bloody lights and take off his mask and talk to her properly? Hold her hand, even? She sighed agitatedly. 'So you haven't found anything wrong with me?'

'There isn't anything wrong with you.'

Impatiently, her voice rang louder. 'Look, can we rewind here? Why exactly am I lying here and why was I brought in? What does my casualty card say?'

'You know, you really shouldn't get yourself so worked up. Your heart is racing. Your breathing is erratic and your oxygen levels are only ninety-four per cent. Do you smoke?'





Her eyes darted to the cardiac monitor on a trolley beside her. She could see the trailing wires and knew they were attached to electrodes on her chest.

'Look, I don't mean to be rude. You've probably had a long day, but I'm a bit pissed off that I've woken up to find myself alone. Now just so we're clear, I'm not going to make a complaint, but I do want to know who you are. I want your name and I want to know what's going on, right now.'

'Well, Alex,' he said, raising purple-gloved hands in the air which held a surgical stapler. 'Just so we're both clear. Right now, if you don't keep a civil tongue I'll be inclined to staple your lips together. You have a pretty mouth. It will be a shame to ruin it.'

A wave of terror instantly hollowed out her stomach. Muscles rigid, eyes open, her thoughts, her anger and her voice were paralysed.

'Temper isn't going to help you here,' he stated calmly.

Champagne and roses, she thought. Think of that. Patrick. Think of him.

'That's better.' She could hear a smile in his voice. 'I can't work with noise.'

Scenarios played like a film on fast forward in her head. She was in the hospital somewhere. Someone would find her. Someone would hear her scream. This was a madman. A patient on the loose. A doctor? Or someone impersonating one? He had obviously taken control of one of the theatres and she . . . she had somehow stumbled across him. Her mouth, the pressure she had felt. The gagging after she dropped to her knees in the car park . . . He had brought her in here.





He had hit her and then gagged her, with a cloth. He must have anaesthetised her. Chloroform or ether . . .

‘Please don’t scream,’ he said, reading her mind. ‘We’re quite alone and I really don’t want to resort to silencing you. I have a headache as it is. Cold wind always gives me one. Surprised you haven’t got one, wearing so little on a cold night like tonight.’

She was instantly aware of her nakedness beneath the green drapes. Her exposed breasts and vagina, her bottom slightly raised in the air and her calf muscles beginning to spasm from the unnatural position they were in.

Patrick. Think of him or anything else apart from being here – Mum, work, the patient who died today. The people who would be looking for her. *Think, Alex.* Rationalise with him. Engage his mind. Say what she was. Who she was. Humanise herself. Isn’t that what the textbooks taught? She had practised many times what she’d learned from them. First rule: acknowledge your patient’s anger. Second rule: defuse it.

‘My name is Alex and I’m a doctor.’

He calmly replied, ‘Are you aware you have a retroverted uterus? While removing your coil I had to use a curved speculum.’

Stunned, she could only gape at him. He had already done things to her. While she lay unconscious his hands had been inside her.

Think, she instructed herself. Think this through before it’s too late and this is all over. Be nice to him. Make him like you. Try, for fuck’s sake, she lectured herself sternly as her tongue lay like a thick slug inside her mouth.





'Th-thank you for doing that. Not everyone would be so considerate.'

'You're welcome.'

His response gave her a tiny glimpse of hope. It was working. They were talking. She hadn't actually seen his face and he probably knew that. She could tell him she didn't know what he looked like and she would forget about whatever he had already done to her. No harm done. He could walk away.

'I wonder,' she said carefully, 'if you would let me up to use the toilet?'

'No need.' His purple-gloved hands disappeared beneath the green drapes and touched her naked skin. She flinched. 'Steady,' he advised as he palpated her lower abdomen. 'Your bladder's empty. I already catheterised you. Output's good.'

'Why have you done that?'

'Major procedure, Alex,' he said, using her name with the familiarity of two colleagues working side by side. 'It will be painful for you to urinate normally for a while.'

Despite herself, a deep sob shuddered from her chest and the sound of her desperate cry filled the room.

'What have you done to me?'

'I already told you. Nothing has happened to you. Yet. The decision is yours. You simply have to answer this question: What does "no" mean?'

Her thoughts scattered as she tried to make sense of the question. Know what? Know him? What the hell was he asking her?

'These, for instance.' He held up her pale pink sandals with their long stemmed heels and delicate straps, which she knew





would turn Patrick on, even though they were impossible to walk in. ‘Do these mean no? And what of these?’ Her stockings were dangled over her face. ‘They surely don’t mean no. When I undressed you, you weren’t wearing a bra and your panties were hardly big enough to make a small handkerchief.’

Her ankles pulled hard against the leather straps, binding them tighter as she tried to draw her knees together. She understood exactly what he was asking. ‘Please,’ she begged. ‘Don’t.’

‘It’s a simple question, Alex. I think we both know what you mean when you say “no”, don’t we?’

Hatred overrode her fear, and for a moment she felt free and brave. She spluttered as she angrily spat the words. ‘I don’t understand the question, you fucker. And my oxygen levels are low because of what you gave me. You need to go back to your books. Are you a failed quack? Is that it, fuckhead?’

She heard the intake of breath, the mild tut of annoyance beneath the mask. ‘Temper, temper. That isn’t going to help you. You’ve just made me decide.’

He turned to the side and pulled forward a gleaming stainless steel trolley holding an array of instruments, all of which she was familiar with. IUCD hook, uterine scissors, a Cusco vaginal speculum, and beside these an anaesthetic mask. Her body went rigid with fear as she saw him pick it up. A Schimmelbusch. The only time Alex had seen one of these before was in a glass cabinet in the study of a retired anaesthetist. It reminded her of the type of mask worn in fencing, a protective device that covered the nose and mouth. Only this was a cruder version: the size of a grapefruit, it consisted of a cradle of thin wire with gauze woven





between so that liquid anaesthetic could be dropped onto it and soaked up before being inhaled by the wearer.

'Open circuit,' he calmly said. 'You can't beat the old-fashioned method. No airway to insert. No anaesthetic machine to monitor. Just gauze and a mask. And gas, of course, leaving your hands free to do other things.'

Her bravery had fled. Her control collapsed. There was no reasoning. There was no escape. He could do what he liked to her and she couldn't stop him. Fleeting, she wondered if it would be better if she died on the table. She could leave life behind without ever knowing it had ended.

'On the other hand, if I knock you out, it stops you and me from talking. You never know, I may need your help if things get tricky. I could give you a mirror and you can direct me if I have a problem. A vulvectomy can be a tad messy.'

Her breathing was too fast and too shallow. Her head was beginning to tingle as she fixated on the mask in his hand. She couldn't breathe. She couldn't talk . . .

'Last chance, Alex. I can make this easy. A short sleep for you, while I do what we both know you'd rather say yes to, and then afterwards it's home to beddy-byes. So I'll ask once more: What does "no" mean?'

Her entire body began to shake. The big muscles in her chest and buttocks and thighs moved continuously. The head blocks and neck collar, the arm restraints and ankle stirrups visibly shook. Tears streamed down her face along with mucous from her nose and mouth, and through all of it she screamed a silent, 'No' as she made herself say the opposite out loud.



‘I’m sorry, I didn’t catch that.’ Now he was making it difficult for her to be heard. He’d changed his mind, and the mask was now covering half her face and the liquid gas was doing its work.

‘I said yes,’ she whispered drowsily. ‘No means yes.’

Chapter two

Alex opened her eyes. She was lying on a trolley, a white sheet draped over her, and two of her colleagues calmly stared down at her. Fiona Woods, her best friend and senior nursing sister of the A & E department and Caroline Cowan, senior A & E consultant. Both wore similar expressions – reassuring ones – and warm smiles were quickly offered. She knew exactly where she was, even down to the cubicle she was in: number 9.

She could see on Fiona's fob watch that it was nearly 2 a.m. She had been working here in the department five hours ago, showering quickly in the staff changing room, her dress hanging up, ready to wear, her make-up and perfume on. Such a short time ago, and yet so much had changed. Her life had hung in the balance. If she'd said no . . . if she'd refused . . . if she'd been braver . . .

She screwed her eyes shut, breathed deeply and slowly, and when she was ready she opened them again.

'Hello, sweetie,' Caroline said in her best caring voice. 'Can you tell me what happened? Tell me what day it is, and where you think you are?'

Alex wasn't yet able to speak about the first question. She concentrated on answering the second and third instead. 'It's

Sunday, the thirtieth of October, and I'm in the city of Bath, in my own hospital, and in my own department.'

Caroline smiled again. 'You are indeed, sweetie, only now, it's the thirty-first. You gave us a fright. The storm outside has been horrendous, non-stop rain and wind. You gave us a proper scare.' She nodded reassuringly. 'But you're all right. A couple of grazes to your knees and a bit of a bump on the back of your head, but otherwise you're fine. Good job Patrick insisted the search carry on, otherwise we might be treating you for hypothermia. I'm going to suggest you stay overnight. Do a few neuro obs on you. You were pretty out of it. In a moment I'm going to call in a few others so we can check you over. Stay nice and still, and before you know it we'll have you out of that collar.'

Tears of relief flooded Alex's eyes and she blinked them away. Caroline's fair eyebrows pulled together in a frown. She looked older than she was, her sturdy body and forearms strong and toned, not from clinical work but from the years she'd spent helping her husband on their farm.

'Oh, sweetie, don't cry. We'll have you sitting up with a cup of tea in no time. Fiona, go round up some more bodies. Let's get our favourite doctor sorted out quickly. None of the boys, mind,' she warned Fiona in a friendly tone. 'I'm sure Alex doesn't want that lot to see her cute bum.'

Alex lay perfectly still. She felt deeply tired and was grateful for Caroline's matter-of-fact manner and easy banter. Later she could scream. Later she could howl her head off and crumple in a heap, but for now it was better that she stay calm. She would need to be calm if she was going to be of any help to the police.



Three nurses came back into the cubicle along with Fiona Woods.

'I'll take the head,' Fiona said to Caroline. The other nurses positioned themselves down one side of Alex, and each put their hands on a part of her body. Her shoulder, her hip and her leg were firmly held. Standing at the head of the table, Fiona positioned her hands either side of Alex's head while Caroline loosened the neck collar and took away the head blocks. The senior consultant then carefully placed her hand behind Alex's neck, and starting at the base of the skull, felt the cervical spine for any sign of tenderness or deformity.

She felt Alex wince. 'That a bit sore?'

Alex started to nod and Fiona commanded her to stay still. 'Hey you, you should know better than that!' Her face was only inches away from Alex's and she smelled of cigarette smoke. Fiona had obviously taken up the habit again. It was a shame, because she had been doing well on the patches.

Over the next few minutes, while rolled onto her side in an in-line immobilisation position with her head supported in Fiona's strong hands, the rest of her spine was checked carefully. Lastly, a moment of humiliation, especially as she knew all these people – Caroline inserted a finger into her rectum to assess sphincter tone. Then it was over and a huge smile covered Caroline's face as Alex was rolled back.

'You're fine, Alex. You're not going to need the collar. I'm going to raise you up a little and then get you that cup of tea.' She looked at Fiona. 'A couple of co-codamol wouldn't do any harm.'



There was no doubt about it, Caroline Cowan was a master at keeping calm in a crisis, the pace and tone of her actions and voice just right for keeping hysteria at bay. She was giving Alex time to adjust to her situation, normalising everything as much as possible so that she would be better able to face the unpleasantness to come. Alex had always admired her, and never more so than now. She was making sure Alex was ready.

As the cubicle emptied of the other helpers, Caroline washed her hands at the sink. A spray of water splashed her green tunic and trousers, and she made light of it as she laughed and pulled paper towels from the dispenser on the wall. Even now, her small laugh was letting Alex know she was behaving naturally. It would be one step at a time. No rush. She was safe, and no one was going to get past Caroline.

‘So, sweetie, any questions?’

Alex bit hard on her bottom lip to stem the flood of tears waiting to fall. Afterwards, she promised herself. She would cry afterwards in the arms of Patrick and no one else.

‘The police. Have you called the police yet? They need to block all exits. And all theatres need to be checked first. I want the whole works: HIV check, syphilis, gonorrhoea, pregnancy – the lot. I don’t care if it takes all night. I need to know what he’s done to me.’

The reassuring expression had gone from Caroline’s face, replaced by a concerned frown.

‘Alex, what are you saying? Why do I need to call the police?’

A thumping sensation started beneath Alex’s breastbone. Her breathing came faster and louder, and her shaking limbs caused the sheet to slide off her.

Her voice, she later learned, was heard throughout the entire ward. Above all the other noises – the cries of pain and confusion and fear, the clatter of trolleys carrying treatments to the cubicles, the twenty-odd monitors beeping loudly at different times. Her voice, her words, carried over all of it.

‘Because he raped me.’

Chapter three

A rape case presented in the emergency department has a level of privacy all of its own. A protocol of silence and dignity wraps itself around the situation. The attending nurse, the doctor and the police go about their business without any other person in the department being aware of what has taken place.

In the case of Alex Taylor, there was not a person in the department that night who *didn't* know what had happened, or who hadn't heard what was alleged to have happened. Even before the examination was over there was speculation about what had really happened. The favoured opinion was that she had suffered a head injury; confusion and concussion perhaps.

In the examination room, the forensic medical examiner and the female detective constable didn't disbelieve the distraught woman, or the rape, but they found it more than difficult to believe the rest of what she said. Only Maggie Fielding stayed neutral and objective, keeping to her professional duty of care as she completed the examination and listened to Alex Taylor's lengthy story. She immediately answered every question put to her by Alex.

‘The coil’s in place, Alex. There’s no sign of it having been moved. I can see the strings, everything looks normal.’

Maggie Fielding waited for Alex’s next comment. She kept eye contact and seemed in no hurry. Maggie was a striking woman, tall, strong limbed and slim. She had magnificent chocolate-coloured hair that reached her waist when it was down.

The forensic medical examiner, who was also a GP, a New Zealander named Tom Collins, wore a permanent look of sympathy. He’d stepped out of the room while the examination took place.

Raising her bottom for the paper towel to be placed underneath, Alex’s pubic hair was combed for evidence. Then the towel, the comb and the hair were dropped in an evidence bag, sealed, signed, dated and handed to the police officer. Her fingernails were clipped and scraped into a separate bag. Hairs were taken from her head. She spat into a sputum pot, and internal swabs from her mouth, anus and vagina were obtained, and blood was drawn. Alex watched as Maggie rubbed a swab on a glass slide, knowing that it would be examined for sperm. Finally, every inch of her was examined for injury. Bruising. Tearing. Bites or teeth marks that could identify her attacker.

Maggie Fielding stepped away and Tom Collins was called back in. Only a few weeks ago, Alex had stood in the same spot as Maggie, beside the same man as he drew blood from a woman who had been attacked by her boyfriend. They had then shared the same status – both professionals, both doing their duty as they documented and photographed the multiple bruises. This time, as far as he was concerned, she was a victim and he was the

professional doing his job and trying his hardest to hide the fact that he knew her personally.

‘Do you think we could go through this one more time?’ the female officer asked.

She had quietly identified herself as Laura Best and told Alex she was sorry this had happened and that it wasn’t necessary to address her formally, Laura would do. Except that now Laura didn’t look quite so sympathetic. Her freckled face was less open. She looked a bit impatient. All four of them had been in the private exam room for more than an hour, and the heat and stale air was closing in on them.

Laura flicked back several pages of her notebook and began reading. ‘You remember walking through the car park, feeling a blow on the back of your neck and then a gag at your mouth and possibly a smell of gas. You then woke up in an operating theatre, found yourself strapped down, your legs up in stirrups, and a pretend surgeon present.’

‘I don’t know if he was a pretend surgeon,’ Alex angrily snapped. ‘I said he was dressed as a surgeon.’

Laura briefly pursed her lips before continuing. ‘He then threatened to staple your lips together, showed you a tray of instruments, and said he’d removed your coil while he catheterised you and then went on to tell you he was going to do an operation on you, a vulvec—’ She struggled to say the word.

‘A vulvectomy,’ Alex answered impatiently. ‘Yes and yes and yes to all of it.’

‘He then asked you a question, which made you think that he intended to rape you. After which you say he anaesthetised you.’

‘Yes.’

‘The next memory you have is of waking here in your own department.’

‘Yes.’

‘And you can’t describe him or recognise his voice.’

‘No. I told you the theatre lights were blinding me. I saw a surgical mask and I could see he was wearing a surgical gown. But his voice . . . it was like he spoke through a speaker system, like he wasn’t beside me. English, but then he also sounded a bit American.’

‘So this English *and American* doctor did all this to you? Hmm . . . forgive me, Dr Taylor, if I sound dense or perhaps insensitive, but you left here at 9.30 p.m. and you were found in the car park at 1.30 a.m.’

‘What difference does that make?’

‘These big needles – orange ones you say were inserted in you – they were in both arms. Surely there’d be puncture marks?’

‘You’re not hearing me. You haven’t listened to what I said. They were there. I saw them. That was obviously a part of his plan to fool me into believing I had been injured. To fool me into believing I was incapable of moving. The whole thing was designed to make me think I was defenceless so that I . . . so that I agreed to let him do what he wanted.’

A small smile curved the young officer’s lips. She looked at Tom Collins and Maggie Fielding. Alex saw them each make brief eye contact with one another. They were sending messages with their eyes and she was being excluded. This was a



private club where only the professionals were allowed – not the victims.

‘This would scare me if this was a movie,’ Laura Best almost tittered.

Anger drove Alex off the cushioned trolley and she stood in her bare feet and a hospital gown a foot away from Officer Best. ‘Well it’s not a fucking movie, so take that smirk off your face. I didn’t fucking dream this up! I was attacked. I was abducted, and if I hadn’t agreed to what he wanted I’d be fucking dead in a morgue right now.’

‘I’m sorry if I’ve upset you. We’re not saying this didn’t happen,’ she said, including Tom Collins and Maggie Fielding in this statement. ‘We’re just trying to understand. Your underwear and your shoes were in place. Every button on your dress was done up.’

And then she said what she was really thinking, what had obviously been going on in her mind all through this interview. ‘Your colleagues tell me you had a difficult day.’

Alex’s head whipped up at the careful tone.

‘No more than usual. It’s always a difficult day in A & E, or haven’t you noticed?’

‘More so than usual, is my understanding. Unless of course it’s every day you lose a baby?’

‘I . . . I . . . She was already dead when the ambulance brought her in. There was nothing we could do for that baby!’

‘I think Alex has had enough,’ Maggie Fielding cut in. ‘She needs to rest. And DC Best, next time you have a case such as this I think it would be appropriate to have a more senior officer



present, or at least one trained in sexual offences, as I'm sure you'll be told when you report back.'

Maggie Fielding was not Alex's favourite person at the best of times. She was a brilliant gynaecologist, but her manner was usually brusque. Right now Alex was glad of her presence.

'I want Patrick. Where's Patrick? I need him here!'

Maggie Fielding nodded. 'He's here. He's waiting outside.'

'Well I want him! Patrick,' she hollered. 'Patrick!'

In Patrick's arms she finally wept. In between incoherent cries she told him of her night. He was explosive in his shock, demanding that Laura Best find this man. He demanded she get more police in and asked why he hadn't seen a posse of them searching the hospital yet. It was only Alex that managed to keep him from running into the night to search for the man, her grip on his hands unwilling to let go, her need for him to stay finally getting through. In his arms she was finally safe and finally soothed enough to sleep.