

control the turn.

His brain registered the dark shape that loomed in front of him a fraction too late.

Desperate, he pushed the left-hand handlebar away from him in an attempt to swerve, his gut twisting as he realised his mistake.

He cried out, his voice muffled within the confines of the helmet as the shape collided with him.

The handlebars were torn from his grip, and then he was airborne, limp as a rag doll and unable to comprehend what had gone wrong.

The night sky spiralled above him and in the distance, he heard the sickening scrape of metal as his motorbike skidded along the road to a halt.

He screamed as his knees found the asphalt

first, the crack of bones inevitable when his body tumbled to the ground.

A moment later, the back of his helmet smacked against the unforgiving hard surface, and darkness claimed him.

TWO

Now

DI Kay Hunter elbowed her way through the door to the incident room of Maidstone police station and bit back a sigh of relief as PC Debbie West reached out for the pile of folders she'd been trying to balance under her

arm.

‘You shouldn’t be carrying these, they weigh a ton,’ she scolded. ‘You’re supposed to be on light duties for at least another eight weeks.’

‘Thanks, Debs.’ She followed the uniformed officer as she weaved between desks and headed towards the office in the corner of the incident room. ‘I thought I’d be okay with those, to be honest. Actually, could you put them on my usual desk?’

Debbie glanced over her shoulder and smiled as she altered course. ‘Still not going to use your office?’

Kay grimaced. ‘Seems disrespectful, to be honest. I keep thinking Sharp’s going to walk through the door any minute and kick me out.’

Debbie dropped the folders onto the desk

and waited until Kay sat down. ‘Any news?’

‘No, but you know as well as I do that Professional Standards investigations are always hush-hush. I guess we won’t know the outcome until he does.’

‘I still say it’s unfair.’

‘Yeah, me too, Debs.’

Kay waited until the uniformed officer had wandered back to her own desk, then contemplated the pile of documents strewn in front of her and resisted the urge to groan.

Her injuries at the hands of one of the most diabolical people smugglers the country had ever witnessed had taken longer than anticipated to heal, despite hours of physiotherapy and enforced rest.

The nightmares returned on a regular basis, but she and her other half, Adam, had elected to