

Now, Yvonne leaned forward in her seat, resting her hand on the dashboard as the car eased past the next padlocked fence. ‘That’s it. That’s the one.’

Tony swerved the car over to the kerbside and cut the engine.

She heard his breathing, heavy on his lips, and wondered if she sounded the same to him. She couldn’t tell – her heartbeat was hammering so hard, the sound of her blood roared in her ears.

He reached for the door handle.

‘Wait.’ She grabbed his arm. ‘What if he’s still here?’

Tony glanced over his shoulder. ‘We just dropped a bag with twenty thousand pounds in it two miles away,’ he snapped. ‘Do you really think he’s going to hang around here to thank

us?’

Yvonne pursed her lips, and shook her head.

‘Right, then.’

He shrugged her hand away, and she watched as he rocked his head from side to side, as if psyching himself up, before he placed his hand against the car door and pushed it open.

She launched herself out of the car after him.

When they approached the fence, Tony grasped the chain that looped through the wire openings.

It fell easily through his fingers.

‘It’s unlocked,’ said Yvonne.

‘He said it would be.’

She could hear it then, the fear crawling through his voice, replacing the brisk no-

nonsense tone he'd tried to maintain since they'd left the house.

‘Did he say where—’

‘Yes. Follow me.’

Instinctively, she reached out for his hand, and he took hers between his fingers, gave it a squeeze, and then set off towards the side of the building.

She knew now how scared he really was. She couldn't recall the last time they'd held hands. Lately all they'd done was bicker and snipe at each other over the smallest inconsequential things.

Melanie had always been a daddy's girl, and Yvonne fought down the surge of jealousy that threatened.

She just wanted her back.

Now.

The building's windows mirrored their reflection as they passed. A dark-coloured privacy sheen had been applied, preventing her seeing into the rooms beyond. She craned her neck, taking in the three-storey concrete monolith. Any corporate signage had been stripped away when the tenants had vacated the premises, and walls that had been stained an off-white tone when first built now resembled something closer to off-grey. Dirt and grime fought an equal battle with graffiti, and faded signs depicting evacuation zones and fire exits hung to the surface in places, the doors boarded up and unwelcoming.

‘How are we going to get in?’

‘He said one of these would be open.’

Sure enough, towards the rear of the building, they discovered a solid steel door.

Although it was closed, a discarded padlock lay on the pockmarked asphalt of the perimeter.

Tony reached out for the handle.

‘Wait.’

He frowned. ‘What?’

She swallowed. ‘Shouldn’t you cover your hand? In case the police want to check it for fingerprints?’

‘I want my daughter back,’ he said, and twisted the handle.

She paused while he stepped over the threshold, then took a deep breath and followed him. She shared Melanie’s fear of enclosed spaces, and bile rose in her throat as she imagined the terror her daughter would feel at being held here.

She squinted as Tony pulled a torch from his pocket and switched it on, the beam