

# KILLERS OF A CERTAIN AGE

a novel



**It's kill or be killed,  
but they've been at this  
a long time....**

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# **KILLERS OF A CERTAIN AGE**

Deanna Raybourn

**BERKLEY**

New York

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For P. You were right. I could. And I did.



I have wintered into wisdom.

—*Beowulf*

## **AUTHOR'S NOTE**

Some of the dates are misleading; some of the names are lies. I'm not trying to protect the innocent. I'm trying to protect the guilty. You'll understand soon enough.

# CHAPTER ONE

NOVEMBER 1979

“MY MOTHER ALWAYS SAYS IT’S COMMON AS PIG TRACKS, TO GO around with a run in your stocking,” Helen says, eyeing Billie’s ripped hosiery critically.

Billie rolls her eyes. “Helen, it’s murder, not cotillion.”

“It’s not *murder*,” Helen corrects. “It’s an assassination, and you can make an effort to look nice. Besides, they’re supposed to believe we’re stewardesses and no stewardess would be caught dead with torn pantyhose.” Helen brandishes a familiar plastic egg. “I brought spares. Please go change while you still have time. I’ll start the coffee.”

The run is so tiny only Helen would have noticed it. Billie opens her mouth to argue and closes it again when she sees the tightness around Helen’s lips. Helen is nervous and that means her eye for detail is hyperfocused, searching out things to worry about. Better for her to fuss about snagged pantyhose than any of the thousand other things that could go wrong on their first mission, Billie decides.

“Mary Alice is on coffee detail. You go check on Nat,” Billie says, plucking the egg from Helen’s hand. She pops into the lavatory just long enough to strip off her ruined hose and shimmy into a fresh pair, emerging to hear the conversation from the cockpit. Movies again—of course. When Gilchrist and Sweeney aren’t debating the odds of getting Goldie Hawn into bed, they are trying to stump each other with film quotes.

“‘A deer has to be taken with one shot. I try to tell people that, but they don’t listen.’” The pilot waits while his copilot pauses the preflight check, screwing up his eyes in thought.

“*Monty Python and the Holy Grail?*” he guesses.

The pilot rolls his eyes. “Jesus, Sweeney, no, it’s not *Monty Python*. Did that line sound funny to you?”

Sweeney shrugs. “It could be.” The copilot jerks his head towards the galley. “Skirt!” he calls.

Billie steps into the doorway of the cockpit.

“Yes, Sweeney?” she asks.

He pulls his mouth to the side, doing his best Bogart as he looks her up and down. “She missed being beautiful by just a hair, but the voice more than made up for it. It was low and smoky, the sort of voice that ordered whiskey neat and told the bartender to keep the change.”

“I don’t remember that in *The Maltese Falcon*,” she says.

His expression is outraged. “It’s original! Come on, I make a great Sam Spade.”

“Don’t quit your day job. What did you ring for?”

Sweeney repeats the quote. “What movie is it from? Vance just threw that one out and acted like I’d punched his grandmother when I didn’t know it.”

“*The Deer Hunter*,” she tells Sweeney. She points to the pilot. “And his next line will be from *The Godfather*.”

The pilot grins. “How do you know that?”

“Every other one of your quotes is from *The Godfather*,” she says. She pauses and the pilot gives her an assessing look. She is perfectly turned out, from the crisp, uncreased uniform to the smooth, dark blond hair tucked into a neat French pleat. Her hands don’t shake and her eyes don’t dart around. But she is nervous—or excited. Something is thrumming under her skin, he can almost smell it. And it is his job to settle her down.

“You got this, Billie,” he says in a low voice. “You and the others are good or they wouldn’t have given you the job.”

She smiles. “Thanks, Gilchrist.”

He shrugs. “I’ve given you a lot of shit in training, but the four of you are alright—provided you make it through tonight,” he adds with a heartless grin.

“That’s comforting,” she tells him as Sweeney laughs.

“Just remember the mission and you’ll be fine,” Gilchrist assures her. “Sweeney and I will be keeping the bird steady, so you girls are on your own back there unless something goes seriously to shit.” His expression says it better not, and she promises herself then that she’d sooner open a vein with a paper clip than ask him for help.

“Got it,” she tells him. She watches him for a second as his hands move over the switches and levers, working through the preflight check. He is at ease, loose as an athlete who has trained and drilled until there’s nothing left but the big game.

Sweeney draws her attention by giving her a nudge. “Tell the brunette I want a drink when this is all over.”

“You know the rules. No fraternizing,” Gilchrist reminds him.

Sweeney makes a noise like a wounded puppy. “Easy for you to say. You’ve got Anthea.” He drags the name out on three syllables. “Ahhhhn-theeee-aaaah,” he repeats in a country club drawl.

“You got a steady girl? Good for you,” Billie says to the pilot.

He pulls down the visor to show a small snapshot of a girl with a dark flip like Jackie O’s, a serious expression in her wide eyes.

“Pretty,” Billie says.

“And riiiiiiich,” Sweeney adds in a sulky tone.

“What’s your problem, Sweeney?” she asks.

“I’m jealous, of course. He’s got a rich, pretty debutante and all I’ve got is a stiffy for the little brunette with the curly hair out there.”

“The little brunette has a name,” Billie tells him. “Natalie.”

“The future Mrs. Charles McSween,” Sweeney says solemnly. “At least for this weekend.” He raises a warning hand. “And don’t tell me it’s forbidden. That just makes it more exciting. It’s like they’re *daring* me to take her out.”

Billie looks from one to the other. “I’m surprised neither of you is chasing Helen,” she says. “She’s the prettiest of us.”

They both shrug. “Pretty, yes,” Gilchrist admits. “Beautiful even. But she’s what we Canadians call a Winnipeg winter.”

“A Winnipeg winter?”

“Great natural beauty but capable of freezing your dick off if you’re stupid enough to get naked,” Sweeney explains. He surveys Billie with a practiced eye. “Of course, you would just—”

Billie holds up a hand. “Never mind. I don’t want to know. Coffee is brewing. I’ll have Mary Alice bring you some.”

Mary Alice is pouring two fresh cups when Billie enters the galley. The air smells of burnt coffee and Mary Alice gives her an apologetic look. “I spilled some on the burner.”

Billie waves a hand. “Who cares?” She reaches for the foil-wrapped package of mixed nuts and sticks it into the warming drawer.

Mary Alice nods towards the cockpit. “How are our fearless leaders?”

“Quoting films and trying to decide which one of us they get to take home for the weekend.”

Mary Alice pulls a face. “God, I hate them.”

Billie lifts an eyebrow. “They’re not all bad. Vance Gilchrist just gave me a vote of confidence, a little pep talk for the evening’s adventure.”

Mary Alice snorts. “Only because he’s in charge and if we screw up, it’s on his head.”

“Probably,” Billie agrees. She reaches out and straightens Mary Alice’s name tag. It is printed with the name MARGARET ANN. Her own name tag reads BRIDGET.

*Always choose an alias with your own initials, their mentor has told them. At some point, you will be tired or distracted or simply human and you will start to write or say your real name instead of your alias. It is far easier to correct your mistake without arousing suspicions if you have at least begun with the proper letter. Also, it means never having to change your monogram. Remember, ladies, your lives are lies now, but the fewer you tell, the simpler it is to keep them straight.*

Helen appears, poised and unruffled although her eyes are unusually bright. “Showtime,” she tells them. “The Bulgarians are here.” Natalie joins them as they hurry to the side of the plane, watching through the round windows as the long black bulk of a limousine approaches.

“Oh god,” Natalie murmurs. “It’s happening. Finally.”

Helen lays a hand on her wrist. “Breathe, Nat.”

Nat pulls in a long breath, flaring her nostrils as she watches the car glide to a halt. The expected quartet of passengers gets out: the principal—a man they refer to only as X—his private secretary, and a pair of bodyguards.

“Oh shit,” Mary Alice says suddenly.

Billie leans forward, pressing her nose to the glass. The bodyguards carry nothing, hands free should they need to draw their weapons. They look like bears, heavily bearded and shaggy-haired, unlike the secretary, with his neatly shaven face and slicked-back hair. He has a calfskin case in his hands, slim body hunched over it to shield it from the light greasy rain that has begun to fall. X himself is cradling a small dog in his arms, an apricot poodle with a tuft of hair gathered into a silk bow.

“Nobody said anything about a dog,” Helen says faintly.

“I’m not killing a dog.” Nat rears back from the window, eyes wide. “I can’t do it.”

“You won’t have to,” Billie promises her. The others stare, and she realizes the flaw in the plan. The four of them have their orders and are supposed to be under Gilchrist’s command. But he will be secure in the cockpit, locked away from whatever happens in the cabin. And in the cabin, they are going to need leadership. It isn’t like their organization to make such a basic mistake, and Billie wonders if it has been done deliberately, a way to test them on their coolness under pressure.

Billie steps up. “The dog is a complication. But it’s not a now problem. It’s a later problem. The now problem is getting our guests on board and settled. Stations. Let’s go.”

To her astonishment, the other three obey, hurrying forward to arrange themselves attractively as the principal starts up the staircase of the aircraft. He is the sort of man who should have been flying on a luxury jet, a Beechcraft or a Gulfstream, something with sleek teakwood interiors and the latest gadgets. But his dossier says he is old-school, preferring twin-engine turboprops, the bigger the better. This one has two engines mounted

in front of each wing, and they rumble to life as the propellers begin to move.

The quartet of stewardesses smile at X, a dour-looking man in his fifties who snaps his fingers as he stands just inside the open doorway, shaking the rain from his hair. His secretary waits patiently behind him, still shielding the case with his body. One bodyguard brings up the rear, standing with bovine stillness on the stairs while the other moves into the cabin. His neck is thick and his gaze is flat and unfriendly as he pokes a head into the cockpit for a quick inspection.

The pilots turn and Gilchrist flashes him a genial grin. “Jesus, you should warn a person.” He waits for an answering smile that isn’t forthcoming. Then he shrugs and turns back to his preflight check.

“You are not Henderson,” the bodyguard says in an accusing tone.

Gilchrist’s reply is cheerful. “Nope. Poor bastard got food poisoning. I warned him not to eat the bouillabaisse, but he wanted to go native. Now he’s crouched in the bathroom at the Hilton, spewing out of both ends.” He finishes with a laugh and looks at Sweeney, who joins in laughing half a beat too late.

“You are not Henderson,” the bodyguard repeats.

“Wow, you’re quick,” Gilchrist says, giving a good impression of a man whose patience is wearing thin.

“We don’t take off without Henderson,” the bodyguard tells him.

The principal pushes his way forward. “What’s the trouble?”

The bodyguard makes a gesture. “This is not Henderson.”

Gilchrist rolls his eyes. “Look, can we skip the rerun? No, I’m not Henderson. Henderson is sick and the agency called me. My credentials are right there,” he adds, pointing to the laminated ID clipped to his shirt.

“Let me see,” the bodyguard says, making a beckoning gesture with his hand.

“Christ,” the pilot mutters, handing over his ID. It is a fake, of course, but a good one, and Gilchrist isn’t worried. Sweeney continues to work methodically through the check, focusing on his clipboard and his



instrument panel while the little drama plays out. The bodyguard scrutinizes the ID.

“Vincent Griffin,” he reads slowly.

“Excellent,” Vance Gilchrist tells him. “I see someone’s gotten the message that Reading Is Fundamental.” He gives the bodyguard a thin smile. Usually Gilchrist prefers an easygoing approach, but sometimes playing the jerk gets better results. And it is always more fun.

He puts out his hand for the ID but the bodyguard holds it close.

“What are you going to do, press it in your diary before you ask me to prom?” Gilchrist demands. “That’s my ID. If you have a problem, get on the radio. Otherwise, hand it over.”

They stare at each other, bristling like dogs. From behind the principal, Billie speaks up.

“Excuse the interruption, Captain, but I need your order and the copilot’s,” she says, drawing every man’s attention.

The principal turns to look and she gives him a cool smile. “Good evening, sir. Can I get you something from the galley before we take off?” She is inches from him and he steps back to take a better look at all five and a half feet of her. The uniform, dark grey and severe, does her the favor of showing off a fair bit of shadowed cleavage and a knee he wants to get to know better.

He returns the smile with his lips but his eyes are cold and small. “Vodka,” he tells her. “On the rocks, and no cheap shit. I pay for the good stuff.”

“Of course, sir,” she says, holding his gaze a moment longer than necessary. “Would you care to take your seat? My colleague is preparing a selection of snacks and dinner will be served within an hour of takeoff.”

She holds out her arm, indicating the cabin behind her. The bodyguard makes a noise of protest, but the principal waves him off with a few choice words in Bulgarian. Billie leads the way to the first row of leather armchairs. The secretary has already taken a seat in the second row, wiping at the rain-spotted calfskin case with a towel Helen provides. Natalie is on her tiptoes, struggling to close an overhead locker while the second

bodyguard watches with enthusiasm for the way her breasts bounce against her uniform shirt.

He says something in Bulgarian to the secretary, finishing with a rough laugh, but the secretary prims his mouth. Mary Alice is in the galley, pouring drinks and garnishing small bowls of warm nuts with salt to make the men thirsty. She smooths the uniform skirt over her curvaceous hips and carries out the tray, presenting the refreshments with a smile. She makes certain that the bodyguards have a hefty glass of something cold and encourages them to drink up quickly before the plane takes off.

“Something for every taste,” the principal says as he takes his seat, but he isn’t looking at the nuts. Billie motions towards the seat belt and he waves a dismissive finger.

“I know the drill. Vodka,” he reminds her. He settles the dog onto his lap, working his thick fingers into its coat. The backs of his hands are pale and she can see the veins, heavy blue ridges under the skin. She thinks of everything she has read about those hands, the things they have done, things they can never undo.

He glances up to find Billie watching him and he raises a grey brow at her, imperious, silently reminding her that her place is to serve. She smiles and the poodle lifts its head, giving her a superior look before it turns away. Even his dog is an asshole.

Billie gives him a deferential nod. “Of course, sir.” She goes into the galley and emerges a moment later with an icy glass and a napkin. She dips her knees, keeping them together as she lowers the glass to his tray. It is a technique the Playboy Bunnies use, graceful and attractive and a bitch on the knees, she thinks as she rises smoothly. “Is there anything else before we take off?”

He says nothing but drops a lazy hand to cup her ass as she turns. For an instant she stops, her eyes wide. Helen gives a short, sharp shake of the head and Billie collects herself, easing out of his grip with a vague smile that promises him a very companionable trip.

The men exchange a few more rough pleasantries in Bulgarian as the attendants buckle themselves into their seats in the rear. Mary Alice sits

next to Natalie while Billie and Helen take seats opposite. Helen touches Billie's hand while she clips herself into the seat.

"Keep it together," she whispers.

Billie nods once, taking in a deep breath. It is all part of the job and she knows it. Nobody has pretended they won't be harassed or groped or propositioned with ugly words and uglier intentions. In fact, they've been assured of it.

"We knew what we were signing up for," she answers shortly. The phone on the bulkhead behind her rings once and she reaches for the receiver.

"Cabin," she answers.

"Buckle up, skirts," Sweeney says cheerfully. "Captain says we're a go."

"Yes, sir," she says, slamming the receiver down a little harder than necessary as the engines begin to scream. They move forward, slowly at first, then gaining speed as Gilchrist opens the throttle, hurtling them down the runway and up into the twilight sky.

When they level out over the Mediterranean Sea, Gilchrist himself phones. Helen gives Billie a narrow look and takes the call. "Yes, Captain?"

"Cruising altitude. It's time," Gilchrist says shortly.

Helen hangs up without a word and nods to the other three. In unison, they rise, smoothing the creases out of their skirts. Mary Alice produces a case and unzips it. Inside are four hypodermic syringes, filled and capped. It was Nat's idea to use the syringes; Mary Alice chose the payload. Sodium thiopental. In proper doses and administered intravenously, it is an anesthetic. Injected directly into the muscle in a massive amount, it will kill within a few minutes, a gentle, painless death that affords at least a little dignity. And it has the advantage of being quick and tidy, unlike other methods they might have used, Billie reflects, remembering Nat's original suggestion of ice picks.

One by one, they pluck their hypodermics from the case. Helen hesitates, her fingers just brushing her syringe. She is the only one who

asked in the briefing why it was even necessary to kill them, given what was going to happen afterwards.

*Because one must never leave anything to chance, Miss Randolph, their mentor explained. This is the only job where overkill is a good thing.*

Helen takes her hypodermic from the case and the four exchange one last look. Holding their syringes carefully, they turn to the front of the plane. Ahead of them, their passengers are nodding quietly, the chloral hydrate in their drinks taking effect. The principal stirs as they approach, putting out a hand to Billie, gripping her wrist. He lifts his lids halfway, struggling to form words against the heavy weight of the chloral mixed with alcohol.

“Why?” he demands thickly.

Billie reaches out with one smooth gesture and slides the hypodermic into his neck, pushing down on the plunger. “I think you know.”

He makes to claw at his neck, but the sodium thiopental is doing its work. His eyelids drop. She watches him slide into oblivion, easing his grip on her wrist as he lets go of life. She glances at the others, who are watching their targets with the same detached interest. After a minute, each puts a fingertip to the neck of her mark.

“Clear,” Billie calls.

“Clear,” Natalie replies.

“Clear,” Helen says at the same time.

“Shit!” Mary Alice rears back, the bodyguard’s hand at her throat, squeezing as he surges forward, the hypodermic dangling from his neck. He wrenches it out, flinging it in an arc that lands it at Billie’s feet. She sees at a glance that the syringe is still full. Mary Alice hasn’t depressed the plunger and the needle has broken off.

Mary Alice goes down hard, the bodyguard on top of her, throttling her as her face turns purple. The dog, startled by the commotion, starts to bark, jumping in circles. Helen scoops it up as Nat launches herself at the bodyguard on top of Mary Alice, landing on his back with as much impact as a flea landing on a dog. He raises one hand to bat her away, shoving Nat hard into the tray table and knocking the wind out of her. She whoops a few

times, sucking in air as the dog continues to bark hysterically, struggling in Helen's arms. The smooth, carefully plotted mission has turned into a goddamned circus, Billie realizes, and it is up to her to salvage it.

She reaches down, grabbing the slit in her skirt with both hands, yanking hard to tear it up and open to the waist. Strapped to her thigh is a knife, and she pulls it free as she straddles the bodyguard. Thank god his hair needs trimming, she thinks as she wraps it around her hand and pulls sharply. His head snaps back, exposing his neck. One quick thrust and she is in, severing the jugular as neatly as slicing a piece of steak. A twist of the wrist and she has the carotid as well, both vessels spurting blood in a fountain that sprays Mary Alice where she lies, gasping for air as she rolls out from under him.

"Jesus," Helen says. The dog in her arms suddenly goes still and sends up a mournful howl.

"Don't put the dog down," Billie instructs. "It will lick up the blood."

"Oh god," Mary Alice manages. "I'm going to be sick."

"You damned well are not," Billie tells her. "We're not finished here."

Just then Gilchrist emerges from the cockpit. "What the hell was all that noise—"

He stops short at the sight of the fitted grey carpet, dark and sticky with the spreading pool of blood. "Oh, for Christ's sake," he starts.

"We're handling it," Billie tells him shortly.

"See that you do," he orders. He turns to Helen. "Parachutes."

She retrieves two large packs and two smaller ones—main chutes and reserves—from the overhead locker and hands them over. "Here you go."

He passes them up to Sweeney before turning back. "You know what to do next. Finish up and get out of here. We'll follow. And don't forget the case," he adds with a glance at the secretary slumped in his seat, the result of Nat's quietly efficient handiwork. "Or all of this is for nothing."

He returns to the cockpit before he can see Billie's upraised middle finger.

Mary Alice, pushing herself to her feet, gives a shaky laugh as she strips off her blood-soaked uniform. Nat passes her a sleekly fitted black suit. It is

made of a material developed by a military contractor happy to sell a few thousand yards under the table. Mary Alice's skin is sticky with blood but she forces herself into the suit, strapping a utility belt and parachute neatly into place. The others do the same, checking their gear as they zip and buckle.

"We have a problem," Nat announces. She lifts the calfskin case, raising the secretary's arm with it. "Handcuffs. And no sign of a key."

"We don't have time for this," Billie mutters. She strides forward with her knife and does what she has to do. Natalie looks on with interest, as if taking notes in a biology lab, and Billie grabs the case, strapping it to her chest with the severed hand dangling like an obscene accessory.

Helen tucks the dog into her suit, zipping it firmly against her body behind the reserve chute.

"There is no chance that dog survives the jump," Mary Alice says.

"There is no chance I'm not going to try," Helen replies coolly. Nat shoots her a look of gratitude and they head to the back of the plane, bracing themselves as Vance points the nose of the aircraft down, lowering the altitude by several thousand feet in a dive that almost stalls the engines.

"Show-off," Helen says.

Just then the cabin lights flicker twice. The signal. Mary Alice steps forward and opens the aft door. Vance has flown southwest out of Nice, parallel with the coast, edging slightly inland before banking hard left to aim the aircraft due south. They are past the bulk of the mountains, flying just over the national park of the Plaine des Maures. It is flatter than the craggy uplands to the east, but it is far from level. According to the topographical surveys they received in their briefings, it is rugged, scrubby, and dotted with parasol pines and dangerous outcroppings. Now it unrolls beneath the belly of the plane, a long, unrelieved patch of black. Far to the west, a narrow line of violet marks the death of the day, and the first stars are winking to life just above the horizon.

Natalie snaps her goggles into place, saluting as she drops away into the night.

Mary Alice goes next, flinging herself away from the bottom step like a swimmer setting off for the deep end. Helen is graceful, tipping backwards with a final wave at Billie.

Billie stands on the threshold of the plane, taking a slow, deep breath. The air smells of salt from the Gulf of St.-Tropez and the sharp tang of fuel, and she is grinning as she throws herself into the blackness.

She counts as she floats. Thirty seconds until the chute can be deployed, and it is the most peaceful thirty seconds of her life. She is conscious of counting off the numbers, fingers touching the ring on the rip cord, waiting, half wondering if she should just let it go. From that altitude, there wouldn't be much left of her when she hits the ground and she wouldn't feel or see it coming. Nothing but that beautiful, empty blackness beckoning like the end of time.

Thirty. Her fingers pull hard and instantly she is yanked as the chute fills, stalling her free fall. She dangles, legs loose as a marionette's as she drops to the plain. To her left, she can see three tiny lights glimmering as Helen, Mary Alice, and Natalie drift to the ground. She lands harder than expected, the impact forcing the air out of her lungs.

She makes herself go limp, rolling to her side as she has been trained. She comes to a hard stop against the base of a parasol pine and the impact wakes a bird that shrieks once or twice before leaving with an angry flap of wings. Billie sees the beacons of the others, winking like fireflies in an uneven line across the plain. She lifts her face to watch two more fireflies drift from the dark bulk of the aircraft. It is flying low, silhouetted against the clouds like a set piece as it heads towards the Mediterranean. The fuel has been precisely calculated to run out somewhere between the Balearics and Sardinia in the darkness before midnight, leaving nothing but a few bits of broken fuselage and a slick of chemicals on the surface of the water. Billie remembers reading it is ten thousand feet to the bottom of the sea, where the bones of ships and sailors have lain for thousands of years. A few more won't matter.

Billie feels something brush her leg—a tortoise? A rat? She pushes herself to her feet and scouts the others, their positions indicated by the

large safety beacons they have activated. She activates her own, nearly blinded by the brilliant white light. She shields her eyes as she hears the helicopter approach, lowering itself to pluck her from the rocky plain. She is the fourth to get picked up, shivering with the aftereffects of adrenaline. She trips as she clambers aboard, landing flat on her belly and wishing she had made a more elegant entrance when she sees their mentor and the head of Project Sphinx, Constance Halliday—code name Shepherdess—sitting in a jump seat. Halliday is every day of seventy years old and dressed in a flight suit, a white silk scarf wrapped neatly around her throat to guard against a chill. A walking stick is braced against her leg.

Helen is already buckled in, unzipping her suit to check on the dog, who is barking furiously but apparently unharmed by his adventure. Nat fusses over him while Mary Alice sits back, eyes closed as if in prayer. The men will be collected by a second, smaller chopper, and they will all gather for a post-mission debriefing at an undisclosed location outside of Paris. They will have to go over every minute of the mission in painstaking detail, outlining their mistakes and scrutinizing every decision for how to improve. But for now, they are safe. The first mission is finished with no casualties beyond Nat's cracked rib and the blood still caked in Mary Alice's hair.

Without a word, Halliday gestures and Billie unstraps the case, passing it over with the hand still attached, the blood drained away, leaving it pale and limp, like a glove full of vanilla pudding. Halliday ignores the hand. She produces a tool and opens the case, extracting a file. For the next few minutes, she skims the material inside, allowing herself one very small smile as she finishes.

“Good work, Miss Webster,” she says in her clipped accent.

Billie gives her a nod and, without warning, rolls over onto all fours to vomit.

It is the greatest day of her life.

So far.