

## Detective Story

### Race

By Rachel Naylor

The dew drops on the ground glinted in the moonlight. A cool gentle breeze blew, swaying the trees slightly, rustling their dry, golden leaves as it shook the thin, tangled branches. A soft crunch of twigs broke the near silence as some gentle footsteps slowly made their way towards the lake. The footsteps soon ceased as the person sat down on an old wooden bench, 'the' old wooden bench, which had been overlooking the lake for over fifty years. The cold, shimmering water rippled violently as the man chucked a stone as far as he could into the middle of the lake, something he did every night before a big race. The man then sat back down on the bench, put his head in his hands, and sighed loudly. This is what he needed. He needed to be away from everyone, to be able to think, to be able to relax.

But, despite what he believed, he wasn't alone.

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'23 years of age, male, weighing 13 stone, 6ft 4 in height, mixed race. Cause of death, 2 bullet shots to the head. This morning the body was identified by a family member as that of Max Heath.' The understudy of FI Luke Murphy looked up cautiously. 'What do you think?'

Murphy sighed with exhaustion. 'What do I think? I think that the amount of poverty in the world is ridiculous, the price of petrol has gone up way too much and that my wife is going to kill me if I don't finish her disgusting cheese casserole tonight. Don't be so tiresome Jenkins, you know how much I hate it when you are not specific! There is absolutely no reason to act so bloody naïve. What do I think about what?'

Owen Jenkins took a deep breath and counted to three before he spoke. It was his way of staying cool when Murphy acted his usual blunt self.

'The case, sir.'

Again, Murphy sighed deeply. 'Well obviously. What about the case? The murder? The suspects? The victim? Abnormalities I have noticed? My thoughts on the weapon? What?'

'All of it sir. Your thoughts on it all.'

'Fine, I can see I am going to get nowhere with you Jenkins as you insist on continuing to be arrogant and vague.' Huffed Murphy. 'But fine, I shall tell you 'what I think'. I believe that, given the

information we have, we are going to need to contact a lot more people before beginning to even thinking about constructing a theory. Therefore I want you to make me an appointment with two different forensic scientists, so we can hear different opinions. I also want to interview Heath's family, friends, girlfriend if he has one, old teachers, GP, and add in anyone you think may hold some useful information, and also, am I right in believing he is a 100m sprinter?'

'You are sir.'

'Ah, I thought I recognised the name. Then make an appointment with his training partners, coach and physiotherapist. I want to interview them all. Oh and I also want a list of all the runners he was meant to be racing against next week at the Commonwealth games.'

'Yes sir.' Murphy mumbled as he hurriedly jotted down notes. 'That all for now?'

'I believe so. See if you can get at least three interviews for this afternoon. I want to get this case moving, so it's finished before the Commonwealth games, for obvious reasons...'

'Obvious reasons?' inquired Jenkins sheepishly.

Making a big deal of showing how irritated Jenkins was making him, again Murphy let out a long heavy sigh. 'C'mon Jenkins, you're the understudy on a Forensic Investigator, have you not picked up any skills working with me whatsoever?'

Jenkins shrugged shyly. Murphy always made him nervous whenever he put him on the spot like this. 'I don't know.' He confessed.

Rolling his eyes dramatically, Murphy looked plainly at Jenkins. 'First, what possible reasons are there that might make me want to have the case finished before the race?' After Jenkins did not reply he carried on in a deliberately irritated voice. 'One: I could have another case that I have been assigned which I want to get onto as soon as possible, two: I could have something planned in the next week which I want to do, with no case ticking away in the back of my mind, begging to be solved, or three: if the murderer is somehow involved in the race, I can prove he is guilty and therefore disqualify him or his associate if necessary. Now which one of those scenarios sounds most believable?'

Jenkins stared at the floor, tail between his legs, humiliated. 'The last one sir.' It annoyed him so much when Murphy was patronising, but on this rare occasion, Jenkins had asked a rather stupid question, and he knew it.

Smiling a patronising smile, Murphy replied 'Yes Jenkins, now would you like a gold star?'

Jenkins believed it best to ignore this comment. Changing the topic quickly, he replied 'I will let you know as soon as I have made the appointments.' He then turned and made for the door.

'Thank you Jenkins.'

Jenkins stopped briefly, showing that he had heard this rare gratitude from his boss, before continuing to leave the room.