

**P380**

**Chapter Forty-Seven: 9:30am (pps380-385)**

*A: Kit picks up the burgundy briefcase (380-381)*

EF: I thought this scene was too obviously functional

8.45

9:30 a.m.

I thought this was  
still with Luke  
and Loui

Kit said: "We've been pissing about here for two hours, trying to round up the family. We can wait much longer. It's time to hit the road."

"I suppose you're right. What cars are there?"

"You saw the two in the garage," Kit replied. "Which do you prefer?"

"I don't want a Ferrari, in this weather, and the Nissan looked a bit old."

"Out front there's Hugo's Mercedes estate, and Miranda's Toyota Previa. They're covered in snow, but that'll soon fall off."

"Let's take the Merc. Where are the keys?"

"I'll have a look."

Kit left the kitchen and ran up the stairs. In Olga's bedroom he searched both bedside tables and two suitcases, and finally found the keys in a pocket of Hugo's blazer hanging in the wardrobe.

When he returned to the kitchen, Nigel was looking out of the window. "Elton's taking a bloody long time," he said anxiously. "And what the hell's happened to Daisy?"

Kit ignored the question. "I'm going to start the car and brush the snow off the windscreen," he said.

"Good idea," Nigel said without turning around.

*B: Toni overpowers Nigel (381-384)*

AB: Where are Toni's mom and the puppy when all the shooting is going on in the house?

On impulse, Kit picked up the burgundy briefcase from the kitchen table, to put in the back of the car.

Then he went out.

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Toni was peeping around the corner of the house, and saw Kit emerge from the back door. He went in the opposite direction, around to the front of the building. She followed him, dashing quickly in front of the open back door, and saw him unlock Hugo's Mercedes.

Now was her chance.

She took Elton's pistol from the waist of her jeans and flicked the safety catch to the unlocked position. There was a full magazine in the grip—she had checked. She held the gun pointing skywards, in accordance with her police training.

Then she ran into the house.

The back door gave on to a small lobby. A second door led to the kitchen proper. She threw it open and ran in. Nigel was at the window, looking out. "Freeze!" she screamed at him.

He spun around.

She levelled the gun at him. "Hands in the air!"

He hesitated.

His gun was in the pocket of his trousers—she could see the lumpy bulge it made. It looked to be an automatic just like the one she held. "Don't even think about reaching for your gun," she said.

Slowly, he raised his hands.

"On the floor! Face down! Now!"

He went down on his knees, hands still held high. Then he lay face down, his arms spread.

Toni had to get his gun. She stood over him, transferred her pistol to her left hand, and thrust its nose into the back of his neck. "I know how to use this, and the safety catch is off," she said. She went down on one knee beside him and reached into his trousers pocket for the gun.

He moved very fast.

He rolled over, swinging his right arm at her. For a split-second she hesitated to pull the trigger, and then it was too late. He knocked her off balance and she fell sideways. To break her fall she put her left hand flat on the floor—dropping the gun.

He kicked out at her wildly, his shoe connecting with her hip. She regained her balance and scrambled to her feet, coming upright before he did. As he got to his knees, she kicked him in the face. He fell back, his hand flying to his cheek, but he recovered fast. He looked at her with an expression of fury and hatred, as if outraged that she should fight back.

She snatched up the gun and pointed it at him. He froze.

"Let's try again," she said. "This time, you take the gun out of your pocket. Slowly."

He reached into his pocket.

Toni stretched out her arm in front of her. "And please—give me an excuse to blow your head off."

He took the gun out.

"Drop it on the floor."

He smiled. "I don't think you'll shoot me," he said.

"You're a second away from finding out."

He was holding the gun in his right hand. She saw his thumb move toward the safety catch.

She shot him in the right shoulder.

She was only three feet away, and she was a good shot, so it was not difficult to wound him in exactly the right place. She pulled the trigger twice, as she had been taught. The double bang was deafening in the kitchen. Two round holes appeared in the pink sweater, side by side where the arm met the shoulder. The gun fell from Nigel's hand. He cried out in pain and staggered back against the kitchen counter.

Toni felt shocked. She had never shot at anything other than a target before. Now she had made holes in a human being. She was a monster. She wanted to throw up.

Nigel screamed: "You fucking bitch!"

Like magic, his words restored her nerve. "Be glad I didn't shoot you in the belly," she said. "Now lie down."

He slumped to the floor and rolled over on to his face.

Toni picked up his dropped gun and checked the safety catch. It was still locked.

Ned said: "For God's sake, untie us!"

Toni stuffed both guns into her jeans and opened the pantry door. Stanley said: "What happened? Who was shot?"

"Nigel," she said. She took a pair of kitchen scissors from the knife block and cut the washing line that bound Stanley's hands and feet. Handing him the scissors, she said: "You free the rest. I have to deal with Kit. He must have heard the shots. Does he have a gun?"

"I don't think so," Stanley replied.

Toni was relieved.

*C: Kit disarms Toni (384-385)*

**P384**

EF: The virus would also kill Kit

IT: I think we should delete the sentence 'The old man did not know whether to throw a tantrum or burst into tears' because I think the phrase 'he saw anger there, as he expected but also grief' is very poignant on its own and somehow 'throw a tantrum' is too toddler-ish for the distinguished Stanley.

JT: Big question here for me about Kit's motivation. At this point Daisy, Elton and Nigel are down. Kit could get out. Why does he choose to stay in? It felt too sudden and surprising.

KF: AT this point Kit must be boiling with rage at the way the plan that was to be his salvation has been foiled at every step by his family and by Toni Gallo. Hence the answers to JT questions below.

Olga said: "Help us out of this cold room, please!"

Kit's voice rang out. "Nobody move!"

Toni spun around. Kit stood in the doorway. He did not have a gun. Instead, he held a simple plastic spray gun of the kind used to splash detergent on windows. Toni almost laughed—he looked like a boy playing at space wars.

Then Kit said: "This is full of virus—the kind that killed Mark Ross."

Everyone stood still.

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Kit met his father's gaze. He saw anger there, as he expected, but also grief. The old man did not know whether to throw a tantrum or burst into tears. Too bad, Kit thought; he brought this on himself.

"How did we come to this?" his father said.

"Too late for apologies now," Kit said.

"I wasn't going to apologise," Stanley said sadly.

Kit looked at Nigel, sitting on the floor, holding his bleeding right shoulder with his left hand. That explained the two gunshots that had caused Kit to arm himself with the spray gun before coming back into the kitchen.

Nigel struggled to his feet. "Ah, bollocks, it hurts," he said.

Kit said: "Get the pistols from Toni."

Nigel staggered up to her. "Give me the guns, bitch," he said.

Toni looked at Stanley.

Stanley said: "If Kit really has Madoba-2 in there, one squirt would kill us all."

Toni took the guns from her jeans.

“On the table,” Nigel said.

She put the guns on the kitchen table.

With his left hand, Nigel picked up a gun and stuffed it into his pocket. He took the second, hefted it, then, with sudden speed, he smashed it across Toni’s face. She cried out and fell back.

Kit was infuriated. What did he think he was doing? “There’s no time for that!” Kit shouted at him. “We have to get out of here.”

“This cow shot me!”

“She ruined my life, but I’m not hanging around to punish her. Knock it off, or I’m leaving without you.”

Nigel hesitated, staring malevolently at Toni.

Kit said: “Let’s go!”

Nigel turned away from Toni. “What about Elton and Daisy?”

“To hell with them.”

“Aren’t we going to tie up your old man and his tart?”

“Don’t you understand, we’re out of time!”

Nigel looked maddened with anger. The stare he gave Kit was sulphuric. Nigel wanted to kill someone, Kit realised, and just at this moment he was thinking of shooting Kit. It was a frightening moment, and Kit could do nothing but stare back, waiting for his life to end.

Then Nigel looked away and said: “All right, let’s go.”