

You loved your last book...but what  
are you going to read next?

Using our unique guidance tools, Love**reading** will help you find new  
books to keep you inspired and entertained.

---

**Opening Extract from...**

# **Dark Suits and Sad Songs**

Written by Denzil Meyrick

Published by Polygon

All text is copyright © of the author

This Opening Extract is exclusive to Love**reading**.  
Please print off and read at your leisure.

---

# **DARK SUITS AND SAD SONGS**

**A D.C.I. Daley Thriller**

Denzil Meyrick

*Polygon*

First published in Great Britain in 2015 by Polygon, an imprint of Birlinn Ltd.

Birlinn Ltd  
West Newington House  
10 Newington Road  
Edinburgh  
EH9 1QS

[www.polygonbooks.co.uk](http://www.polygonbooks.co.uk)

Copyright © Denzil Meyrick 2015

The right of Denzil Meyrick to be identified as the author of this work has been asserted in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved.

ISBN 978 1 84697 315 4  
eBook ISBN 978 0 85790 850 6

*British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data*

A catalogue record for this book is available on request from the British Library.

Typeset by Hewer Text (UK) Ltd, Edinburgh  
Printed and bound in Great Britain by Clays Ltd, St Ives plc

## Prologue

Solemnly, the pontoon bell tolled, roused by the breeze that blew across Kinloch from the Atlantic beyond, carrying the promise of a milk-warm beginning to another glorious midsummer day. The first sepia light of the sun embraced the sleeping town in its glow.

As though roused by this, the wheelhouse door of *The Alba* swung open. The sun reflected softly off the varnished oak door, flashing more keenly from the polished brass of the porthole, as Walter Cudihey strode out onto the narrow deck, his face a mask, eyes dark. In his left hand he carried a petrol can, his right, bunched into a fist, grasped something small and out of sight.

With a fluidity of motion that belied his age and physique, he loped over the side of the vessel and onto the pontoon decking. He cast his gaze across the oily blue waters of the loch, over the steep side of the harbour wall and on to the road and beyond, where stood a solid granite structure, silhouetted in the first light of morning. Atop this monument to the war dead of Kinloch was a simple cross, black against the glow of the rising sun. Cudihey turned his back on the memorial and, facing east, sat neatly cross-legged on the wooden planking, his pupils pinpricks in the morning light.

He sat for a few moments and then, neither changing his expression, nor removing his gaze from the horizon, lifted the can and poured its contents over himself. The clear liquid splashed over his bald head, soaking the small fringe that was the remnant of his hair and drenching his white T-shirt, Bermuda shorts and the wooden decking as it began to glug deeply from the emptying Gerry can.

Cudihey, eyes now closed against the stinging fuel, blindly laid the can down, flicked the cap off a brass petrol lighter, hesitated for a heartbeat, then with a quick downward flick of his thumb set a flame which quickly spread up his arm and consumed his whole body, first in red, then green, fire. The fire crackled deeply as Cudihey's body surrendered to the flames, rendering down, like a Sunday roast.

Seabirds cried and distantly a dog barked as a dark pall of putrid smoke spread from the harbour and across Kinloch, souring the early morning air. As the flames spread to the decking, globules of burning fat found their way to the loch and hissed in the still waters. A woman screamed as the whole length of the pontoon began to blaze.

A black mass, momentarily visible through a veil of fire, slowly toppled backwards as the ruined decking collapsed into the water, sending a wave of steam into the fetid air.

# 1

Jim Daley woke with a start. Squinting at his watch, he noted the time was 5:28. Propping himself up on one elbow, he tried to collect his thoughts, as well as take in his surroundings. His mouth was dry, his head throbbed and he felt slightly squeamish; an undeniable product of the overindulgence of the night before. Like far too many nights recently, he thought.

As the early morning rays poured through the flimsy curtain, he was dismayed to find that he was taking up far too much of a small double bed, which, while it wasn't his own, wasn't exactly unfamiliar. The walls were adorned with modern prints and arty black-and-white pictures; above his head, a straw hat trailing a bright red ribbon was pinned to the wall.

Beside him, the long auburn hair of the woman he had spent the night with cascaded across the white pillow and framed her pale face. Her breath was heavy and her long lashes flickered as she slept and dreamed. He took in her pale beauty for only a moment before darker thoughts began to crowd his mind and the sickness at the pit of his stomach returned, as cloying and insistent as ever.

With as little commotion as his large frame would allow, he levered his legs over the side of the bed, looking at the

messy floor for any sign of his own clothes. Alongside a lacy bra, discarded black tights and a pair of knickers – so slight they barely merited the name – lay his shirt; light blue and huge amidst the other garments. On top of it lay a silver foil packet, torn open to reveal a used condom, knotted then tucked neatly back into its former home. He sighed as he rubbed at the stubble on his chin.

As he pulled on his shirt he noted in the wardrobe mirror that his face, despite gaining lines and shadows hitherto absent, was noticeably thinner. Unfortunately, as he breathed in to fasten his trousers, the extent of his persistent gut banished any fleeting joy. He removed his jacket from the back of the room's only chair and winced as coins fell from the inside pocket, jangling noisily in the quiet room; though not enough to wake his sleeping companion, who merely turned her head, rearranging the display of her hair on the white linen. Despite himself, despite the difficult situation he had engineered, despite the habitual deep pangs of Catholic guilt, he smiled. She was so beautiful. He donned his jacket then stepped over the rest of the mess towards the door.

Once in the narrow hallway, he did his best to collect his thoughts. He had always been an early riser, though this was, even for him, a smaller hour than normal to be awake and fully functioning; especially after drinking wine the previous evening, which he could still taste on his breath. As he reached the lounge his mobile phone burst into life, demanding his attention. He picked it up from the coffee table, noted the missed calls, and read the new message, a frown exaggerating the lines on his forehead. He was about to start looking for the house phone when a sound from behind prompted him to turn round.

‘Morning, sir . . . Jim,’ she said with a smile, raising her eyebrows at her initial mistake. Daley looked into her ice-blue eyes, down to her small, upturned nose and red lips, the lower of which had a slight pout. Even under the folds of her dressing gown her long, graceful limbs were obvious, as was the cleft between her breasts that sent a shaft of desire through him. Not for the first time, he was reminded of a young Liz.

‘Morning,’ he smiled. ‘How are you?’

‘Fine. Tired, I guess. Trouble?’ She looked at the phone in his large hand.

‘If Brian was here, he would say, “a policeman’s life is not a happy one”. I have to get in ASAP. I was going to give them a quick call – do you know where the phone is?’ He looked at her pleadingly, a comic grimace on his face. “The bloody signal here is a pain in the arse – thanks,’ he said as she handed him the phone, retrieved from under a magazine on the couch.

‘Coffee?’ she yawned.

‘Eh, yes.’ Daley said, looking about for somewhere to sit. ‘Just a quick one, then I’ll need to get going. You know how it is.’

She smiled at him weakly; she knew all too well exactly *how* it was. He was her boss, more than twenty years her senior and they had been lovers for almost seven months.

‘If they ask for DC Dunn, tell them you don’t remember exactly who I am.’ She looked over her shoulder with a grin as she made her way to the small kitchen.

He watched her pad away. In all honesty, it was difficult, very difficult. In order to keep their relationship secret, he had encouraged her to move from her flat in the town centre to a pretty little rented cottage on the outskirts of the village



of Machrie, five miles outside Kinloch, off the road and down a farm track, where even the determined gossips of the town would find it difficult to uncover their secret – or so they had thought. Within days of her move though, and less than twenty-four hours after his first visit, he was stopped in the street by a local acquaintance, who felt it was ‘only right tae let him know jeest whoot everybody was sayin.’ After a period of coolness, during which he felt lonelier than ever before in his life, he had returned. Since then, though trying to remain as discreet as possible, they’d carried on their illicit affair, and soon, if anyone had really cared in the first place, the nods and winks stopped – in the main, anyway – and life returned to some sort of normality.

He began by promising himself that he couldn’t love her, that it was all part of life’s rich experience. Then, when she wasn’t there, he felt an emptiness that gnawed at him; unable to sit down, stand up, sleep, or perform any of the other mundane activities of which most of life comprised. He loved to be around her. She was kind, with a quiet determination and dry sense of humour. They made sense together; they had similar tastes, they laughed at each other’s jokes, and both understood the demands of a career in the police force.

As he overheard her moving in the kitchen, he could hear she was singing a song to herself. Like him, she loved music but was tone deaf, making it impossible to discern the tune she was murdering. He looked at the ceiling, rubbed his eyes and sighed. He knew he shouldn’t have carried on with this relationship. They had kissed on the day he had saved her life, the day he showed Liz the pictures of her in the arms of Mark Henderson – the day his life had changed. He had tried to reason with himself, but to no avail. Liz’s absence had left a

gaping hole in his life, one that only his young subordinate appeared able to fill.

He was careful to dial 141 before entering the number for Kinloch police station; even though gossip, rumour and speculation had died down, he didn't need to rekindle the fire.

'Daley here,' he said, almost yawning. 'What's up?' He listened for a few moments, then began to rub his forehead, muttered a hasty goodbye and clicked the phone off.

'Not good, I take it?' Mary Dunn's face was serious as she passed Daley the steaming mug of coffee.

'No. Not good at all. In fact, I would get dressed if I was you.' He gave her a weak smile, as he tentatively sipped the strong coffee.

She watched him walk to his car and drive away. Certainly, he was not the young, groomed, tanned and mousturised specimen of manhood held up as the ideal to women of the twenty-first century; he was almost twice her age, but it didn't seem to matter. She thought he was fine; confident without being arrogant, brave but also thoughtful. He made her feel special, he made her heart leap.

Dunn brewed another cup of coffee. Soon she would have to put on her mask, pretend that the man in the glass box wasn't the man she loved, but what he had been from the beginning – her boss. She pushed the hurt from her mind, telling herself that this was just the way it had to be right now. She didn't want to analyse it all too closely. She didn't want reality to come up short.

The telephone rang. Someone in Kinloch Police Office was about to tell her something she already knew.

## 2

As Daley drove down Main Street, he could see that despite the hour a large crowd had gathered near the pontoons. A small number of uniformed officers were struggling to maintain order; it looked as though they were fighting a losing battle. He parked his car as close to the loch as the throng would allow and made his way towards the scene. Black smoke was still visible in the clear air and an acrid smell, carried on the warm breeze, assaulted his senses.

‘Excuse me,’ Daley shouted as he tried to shoulder his way through the gathered locals.

‘Aye, let the officer past,’ a member of the crowd called.

‘C’mon, let the main man through!’ someone else insisted. ‘Can ye no’ see how tired lookin’ he is?’ This spread a frisson of mirth amongst the early morning onlookers.

‘Nae wonder; I’d be stayin’ in my bed a’ day wae that wee cracker.’ At this, many of the locals – despite the visceral scene before them and the bitter smell – burst into gales of laughter.

Though he was used to the banter, the early hour and something about the locus made him angry; the crowd of people so anxious to see the remains of a fellow human being made him feel suddenly sick. He turned on his heel. ‘Right,

that's enough! Someone has lost their life here and all you can think to do is laugh and joke. I am treating this as a crime scene until I know otherwise, so I want you all to move back and let us get on with our work, otherwise I will be instructing my officers to make arrests. Constables, if you would,' he beckoned to the uniformed officers, who began to push the now much more pliant gathering away from the pontoons.

Daley ducked under the yellow police tape and felt his trousers strain at the behind. Thankful that they remained intact, a small mercy, he walked to the edge of what was left of one of the buoyant decking piers that made up the yacht moorings. Members of the fire brigade were aboard a small wooden vessel, the front of which was badly burned. It was secured next to what could best be described as a gaping black hole which had turned the far end of the decking into an island. He stepped towards the uniformed sergeant and two suited figures that had their backs to him, all peering into the shallow waters of the loch.

'Good morning, gentlemen. An update please, DS Rainsford.'

A tall young man in a sharply tailored suit walked towards him. His long thin face and angular features gave him an almost haughty look; he wore his hair short and parted to one side. He was slightly taller than his Daley who, faced with such sartorial elegance in his junior, felt the subconscious need to adjust his hastily knotted tie.

'Good morning, sir. As you can see, I thought it best that we try to remove the body from the water as soon as possible.' He gestured towards three men who were waist deep in water, two of whom Daley recognised as members of the local RNLI, the other a fire and rescue officer. The lifeboat

men wore orange wetsuits, whilst the fireman had to make do with a pair of yellow waders, over which water was already lapping. ‘The tide’s on its way in, sir. I trust you appreciate the need for action – even before SOCO get here.’ Rainsford’s accent sounded neither Scottish nor English – neutral, Daley always thought.

‘What about corruption of the scene?’ he asked, anxious that no evidence be lost in the attempt to retrieve the body from the loch.

‘If we don’t get the body out of there it’ll start to degrade rapidly, I’m afraid, Jim.’ Daley turned towards the short, fat figure of Dr Richard Spence, one of the local doctors, all of whom, given to Kinloch’s remoteness, dealt with police matters as and when necessary. Daley liked the man, unlike some of the less police-friendly members of the practice, and respected his opinion.

‘That’s the trouble with this type of thing,’ Spence continued. ‘Fry ‘em then immerse them in cold water. It’s a bit like doing it with a side of beef, bits will start coming off – especially in salt water. Best we get him – or her – out of there as soon as we can, Jim.’

‘Thanks, Richard,’ Daley said to the doctor, then turned back to the DS. ‘So what else do we know?’

‘I spoke to the pontoon manager on the phone a few minutes ago, sir. The boat’s called *The Alba*, she docked here yesterday lunchtime. A man named Walter Cudihey booked the vessel in and paid his berthing fees by credit card; the manager’s going to email me the details as soon as he gets into the office. I’m also checking with the RYA to see if he’s registered with them.’ He smiled confidently. ‘Apart from fire and rescue personnel dealing with the fire on board the

vessel, nobody has touched it.' Rainsford raised his brows and looked down his nose. 'Thought it best we wait for you before commencing a search, sir.'

Daley nodded curtly. 'Yes, you did the right thing, DS Rainsford.' The young detective sergeant had been in place for nearly four months; he was efficient, knowledgeable and bright, though something about his manner irritated Daley. Perhaps it was his honours degree in sociology, his trim, fit physique, or his somewhat patronising manner – maybe a mixture of all three. He supposed he reminded him vaguely of his hated brother-in-law, Mark Henderson. In any event there was something about Marcus Rainsford that Jim Daley didn't like. And he couldn't ignore the obvious: simply, DS Rainsford, despite his undoubted intelligence and grasp of the minutiae of police procedure, lacked one thing – he wasn't Brian Scott.

It took over an hour for the body, by way of an impromptu hoist, to be removed from the loch, during which time SOCO officers arrived to carry out a forensic assessment of the craft and what was left of the pontoon. The body was being prepared to be taken to Glasgow by helicopter so that a detailed post mortem could take place. Locals lined the street as Daley drove up the hill and in through the gates of Kinloch Police Office.

'Excuse me, sir.' DC Dunn was already at her desk, her open laptop displaying some hazy black-and-white images. 'I though you might want to see this,' she said, gesturing towards the screen.

Daley leaned over her, placing his hand on the back of her chair to prop himself up as he squinted at the laptop. Her

hair smelled of strawberries and he watched, absently fascinated, as she used the keyboard scrolling function with one long thin finger to rewind the on-screen footage.

‘Here, sir.’ The image froze, bringing to a halt a long array of numbers at the top of the screen which meant little to him; in the bottom right hand corner, the time was displayed as 04:17:23. ‘This is footage from the CCTV camera at the head of the pier, sir. It covers the area quite well, though – well, you’ll see for yourself. She clicked an arrow on the screen and the image began to move.

Though the picture was monochrome it was well defined. There was a flash as the cabin door of *The Alba* swung open, revealing a short, fat bald man, wearing a T-shirt and shorts, carrying a large square container in one hand. Daley watched as he jumped easily onto the pontoon and out of shot.

‘What now?’ he asked, for some reason looking at the top of Dunn’s head.

‘Just a second – keep watching, sir.’

There was a flash which momentarily turned the laptop screen white. As the glare faded, the flames that now engulfed the yacht could be seen flickering on the extreme left of the picture.

‘There we have it,’ said Daley, standing up with a long sigh.

‘No, wait a minute, sir, that’s not all.’ Dunn set the image swirling backwards at high speed as she rewound the footage. Daley, leaning back over her again, looked on as the time on the bottom right of the screen scrolled backwards. ‘Once I isolated the actual event, I thought I’d do a quick recap to see what happened in the time prior to the fire.’ She looked up at Daley and smiled at him. ‘Watch.’ She stopped the footage at 02:07:48.

Again the cabin door swung open, though this time no sunlight flashed against the porthole. Two men stepped onto the narrow deck of the vessel, one of whom looked very unsteady on his feet. Daley watched as this man was helped over the deck and towards the pontoon by the man with the bald head and Bermuda shorts. Deftly, Dunn stopped the image, just as the unsteady figure stood up straight and looked in the general direction of the camera. There was no mistake – even at this distance, Hamish’s face was unmistakable.

‘Oh no,’ Daley grimaced.