

## ***THE END***

‘What happened to Kofi? Did you see?’

Charlotte was the first to speak.

Still no one answered for a minute. No one wanted to.

‘I saw him fall,’ Paul ventured, his voice dry and slow. ‘Before the door shut. After the gunshot.’

Danny nodded. But he realized it was pointless to nod. It was like nodding at his dad. He wondered if this was how his dad felt. In pitch blackness. Confined.

‘That’s what it sounded like to me too,’ Danny said, breaking the latest silence.

Holt spoke next. ‘What happened out there?’

Danny gathered his thoughts. What *had* happened? They had come into the container, thinking they could rescue Holt, thinking that Kofi had distracted the two men.

Then the door had closed.

After Kofi had been shot.

It seemed unreal to Danny. How could these things have happened? How could he be trapped in a container with the distinct possibility that he would never get out alive?

Then he realized. His phone. They could just phone someone. He checked the screen.

No network coverage.

Danny’s heart sank.

And then the panic started.

In his arms. Followed by a tightness running up his biceps to his shoulders. Then across his

chest. He knew it was panic. He knew he had to keep control. He felt a pressure in his head, like it was swelling hugely. He heard voices. Paul and Charlotte, talking to Holt. But he was too under the influence of his body to hear properly. He stood up. His legs had gone wobbly. He wanted to know that he could still use them.

His head was buzzing now. He could see tiny lights swirling in the darkness. He wondered if he was about to faint.

No. He had to keep control. He had to find a way out of this. He had to be strong.

‘Danny?’

He heard Charlotte’s voice. All fuzzy, making weird echoing sounds. He tried to home in on it. Use it as a focus.

Focus. That was it. He dug his fingernails into

his arms.

‘Danny?’ Charlotte’s voice was clearer now.

‘Yeah?’ he said.

‘I asked if you were OK.’

‘I’m fine.’

‘Then why didn’t you answer me?’

Danny could hear an edge in Charlotte’s voice. Something he’d not heard before. Maybe it was panic in her too. He could also – somehow – hear the sound of Paul and Holt listening.

‘I was trying to think of a way out of this,’ Danny said. ‘There is a way out of everything.’

There was another long pause. Danny tried to control his thoughts during the silence in the dark. They needed to get out of this rut. Think ahead. Think like real detectives.

He turned his head to where he thought Anton

might be.

‘What about you, Anton? What’s happened to you since they put you here?’

‘Nothing.’

Suddenly Anton’s face lit up. A great glow around him.

‘What’s that?’ Paul asked.

‘My watch,’ Anton said. ‘It lights up. Quite powerfully.’

‘Our phones!’ Charlotte shouted.

‘What?’ Paul said. Then, ‘Of course!’

‘No reception,’ Anton cut in. ‘Not on my network.’

‘Nor mine,’ Danny said reluctantly.

He listened to Charlotte and Paul going into their pockets, saw their faces light up faintly, then their hopeful expressions turn to frowns.

‘Nothing,’ Charlotte said.

‘Nor me,’ Paul said.

Another pause. A tense pause that felt like it had lasted an hour but was actually only a few seconds long.

‘I’m sorry,’ Danny said. ‘It’s my fault we’re here.’

Nobody replied. And Danny wondered if they all blamed him – his wanting to solve football crimes – for bringing them here. If they all thought that he had led them to a slow, painful death.

