

Chapter 2

Suzann had just finished washing the dishes and the sink and stood hunched over the worktop with her head hanging between her shoulders. She was exhausted after doing the chores. What else could she do to take her mind off the current state of affairs? She decided to sit on the living room sofa where there lay a snoozing feline. Smoky had been her only real company these days. Her only means of consolation through everything that had happened.

Sometimes she found herself talking to him as if he understood. Even though he didn't have the ability to speak to her, she felt like he understood.

Somehow. Nicola didn't feel she was able to talk to Suzann anymore, because she knew that it was a bad idea to bother her if she was in a bad mood, but she was always upset. They were slowly growing apart.

Suzann switched on the TV to try to find something interesting to watch. She flicked through channels furiously, then just abandoned them and left the TV on. She was hesitant, staring at her phone on the dining table, she got up off the sofa, picked up her phone and wheeled it between her thumb and index finger for a couple minutes. Ambitiously, she checked her messages and call log. Still nothing. Adrian hadn't returned home for a few weeks and wasn't replying to any of her texts.

She flipped her phone onto the sofa and started watching a movie. She watched how the old couple in the movie just got on so well for so long. How did they do it? She was sick and tired of Adrian always being at her throat for the most futile reasons, and she knew it was tearing her daughter apart inside, but she acted like everything was okay.

Suzann couldn't watch the film anymore. It was hitting a little too close to home, so she changed the channel again. She could think of absolutely nothing more useful to do. She just sat there, drumming her fingers against the seat and arm of the sofa. Her mindless drumming got harder and faster, putting an end to Smoky's sleep. The cat looked at Suzann and crawled into her lap.

The blinds blocked out the sunlight, and the glow from the TV illuminated the sorrowful expression on her face. In her failure not to bother herself about Adrian's absence, she gave in. Frustrated, she dialled Adrian's number, punching the keypad with her thumb. She called and waited for an answer. No such luck. It went straight to voicemail again.

Although she was glad she didn't have to suffer from his abuse, she still missed him. She missed the person that he used to be. The kind, caring, loving

husband and father he once was. She was furious to see how his unexplained show of iniquity had crept in over such a short period of time. She just sat there motionless, apart from her eyes, which flicked to her right, staring at her wedding photo. The happy faces taunted her. Her stomach was tensing. She tried to stifle a tear but her emotions took control. The anger welled up inside her, up to her neck. With a violent outburst, she hurled her phone like a shot-put across the room at the photo. However, she missed and her phone smashed into a dozen pieces.

Alarmed, Smoky sprinted away through the passage and up the stairs.

Suzann crawled onto the sofa, curled up with her head buried in her knees and wept silently.