

Title: Death Is In The Writing

Soundtrack link: <https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLR5EJbFrPOrTGbiBTtUGyR56BNNCK2XLs>

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Arriving home, Christopher Hall sat down in his kitchen. Staring at him was a framed photo of his wife. Taking it in his hand, he placed it face down upon the book she'd been reading, a Christie, and went upstairs to change. With most of his clothes still in his suitcase, he dressed in a suit that was hanging next to his wife's clothes. He adjusted his tie. He always tied it skewed to the left. She always corrected it. Always asking in an exaggerated voice, how he had gotten the job of a DI if he couldn't even tie his own tie. Smiling, 'luck I suppose', he'd always reply. He knew how to tie his tie. He knew, if he tied it slightly skewed, he'd get a few extra moments with her. Above all, he knew he did not have luck. Nine months ago, after work, he found her at the bottom of the stairs; neck broken. Ruled as an accident.

His mobile rang. Chief Super. "Sorry to call so soon Christopher, but we've got a case. DS Willsbury will pick you up. You should know that this isn't the first like this that we've had. I've transferred it to you. You have the most experience with these matters". She hung up.

Willsbury greeted him and took him to the house, parking close to a few small shops. Moon was crouched over the body. "Ah, I didn't know you were returning yet Hall. It's nice to see you; perhaps not the best circumstances though", he spoke with a smile.

"I returned today", DI Hall exhaled. "So?"

"Female. Mid-forties. Cause of death; blunt force trauma to the back of the head. From what I can see at the moment, there are no other significant injuries. I'd say the time of death was between four and six this morning."

Hall walked back to the car. "Right Willsbury, what else do we know about the deceased?"

"Linsey Potts. Lived here for 22 years. Registered nurse for Sunny Hall Care Home. The neighbour found her this morning".

"Have officers take statements, and we'll take a look at that care home", Hall ordered.

They were met by a woman; Claire Richards. Eyeing the photo DS Willsbury showed her, she confirmed the deceased was Miss Potts. "No, she was lovely. She was so kind with the rest of the staff and residents. She even helped run extra events for them such as the dance and book clubs. No one wanted to hurt her", she sobbed in response to DI Hall's question. Before they left, Hall took in her office. Books on her desk, a casual jumper in her bag, pictures of her with residents on the wall.

Back at the station, he reviewed their evidence. "So, there have been a string of earlier murders. All similar. All women between 40 and 55. All killed by blunt force trauma with items from the house." He stared at the evidence board covered in photos related to the previous victims. 'BC' written in a diary. 'Night' scribbled on a calendar. 'Christie' jotted down on a post-it. What did they mean? What did all of these women have in common? And there it was. How did he miss that? Then it really did become clear. There weren't three victims there were four. "Willsbury, have a unit sent to the care home to secure the management office." He threw the door open. "I'll meet you there, but I need to call into a shop first".

He headed straight to the management office. "No one has entered since we got here." Willsbury explained.

"I demand to know what is happening?!" Miss Richards shouted from outside.

DI Hall motioned in. "A murder enquiry, in which you lied to us. You see, when I came here yesterday I noticed that stack of books on your desk, *Endless Night* by Agatha Christie, and I couldn't quite place where I'd seen them before. But then I remembered. I'd been staring at the answer for so long but I just couldn't quite reach it. My wife was reading it for a book club she was part of. I believe it to be the same book club Miss Potts, some of the residents, and I'm sure the rest of our victims were part of. Victims you murdered.

"A lovely story, but a story is all it is. Humour me though, why would I ever want to do such a thing?" Miss Richards spat.

"Money. You've worked here for a very long time and those photos on the wall show you've bonded with some of the residents. I think some of them have even written you into their will. Then this book club started and these other women, including my wife, began to get close with the residents. You couldn't have that. So you killed them. That way, you're the only one to receive any money. And then you removed the books from their houses, so there was no connection."

"Rubbish! There's no evidence for this!"

"Yes. There is. Earlier, I also noticed a jumper in your bag. This CCTV footage from a shop I noticed situated on the road of our latest victim's house, shows a figure in jeans and a jumper being dropped off outside within the time frame of the murder. Twenty minutes later, they were picked up. I think that figure is you. You came to work after and changed, but because officers have been in and out all day, I don't think you had time to remove those clothes." Hall nodded to DS Willbury "if you could." Quickly searching, she located the clothes and unravelled the jumper. Dark marks marred the front. "I'm sure when we get that tested, it will come back as Miss Potts blood. I think the fingerprints on those books will match our other victims as well.

Including my wife.” Hall stopped and stared at her. Her face pale with shock. “Get her out of here”.

Word Count: 998