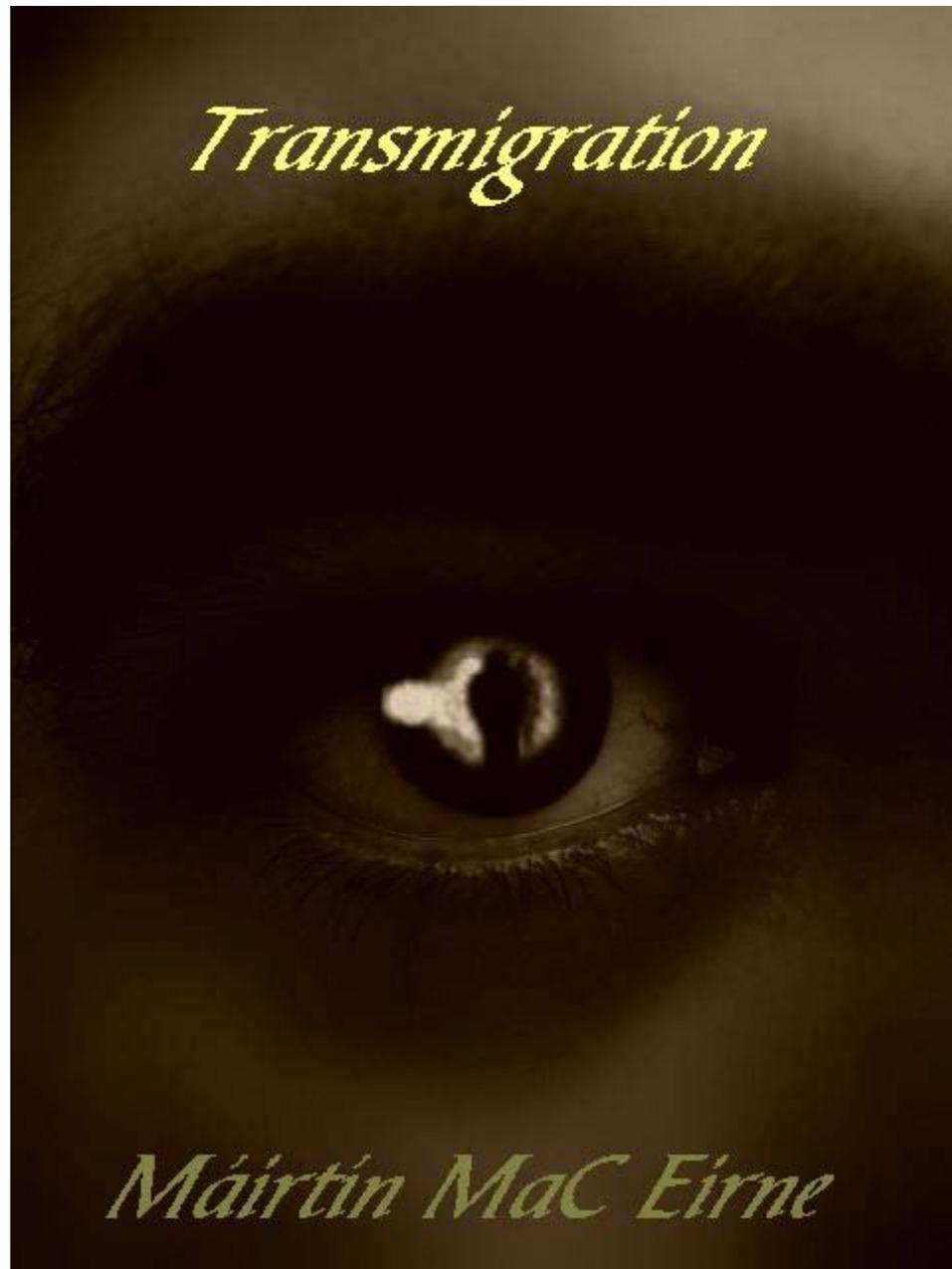


The Reaper is out for his pound of flesh.

Transmigration

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Photography and Artwork by Susan McCann

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CHAPTER FIVE

**21ST DEC 1989
DUBLIN, IRELAND**

Detective Andrew Young awoke with a start to the annoying sound of his telephone ringing. He immediately scrambled out of bed, then ran out of his bedroom, and into the hallway to answer it.

“Hello,” he answered.

Andrew listened attentively to the information he was receiving.

“Yes sir. Straight away,” replied Andrew before hanging up.

Andrew walked back into his bedroom, quickly got dressed, left his apartment, and begrudgingly made his way down to his car.

Andrew had just received a telephone call from his Superintendent, whom had informed him that there had been a double murder in his district. The Superintendent requested that Andrew attend

the scene. Andrew cursed his Superintendent for getting him out of bed, but he knew he had no other choice.

This was Andrews' second murder scene this month. *Probably another gangland feud* thought Andrew, *another one that had got totally out of control.*

Gangland was a new thing to Dublin in the last number of years. It had arrived along with the drug trade. Generally, it was something that was associated with London or New York, the bigger cities. In those major cities you would hear about a gangland related murder, at least, one every day.

Nevertheless, the drug lords in Ireland were a new breed in every aspect, a new breed of killer, a new breed of controller. They had no respect for human life. They would kill over something petty as someone owing them as little as a hundred pounds.

The murder Andrew had attended a few weeks earlier was that of a young lad whom had himself mixed with the wrong people. Andrew and the Gardai knew who the murderers were, but had no solid evidence linking them to it. They believed from evidence they had gathered that the young man was a drug courier for a well-known gangland kingpin.

Somehow, the young man got into the predicament that he owed this ruthless man money.

Apparently, the young victim was never paid for a drop of hashish he had given to a drug user, therefore, instead of the kingpin going after the drug user, he pressured the courier. When the courier did not come up with the money, they shot him twice in the back of the head.

Andrew had gathered up some witnesses to testify against the kingpin. However, they all withdrew their statements a few days after placing them. Apparently after they were intimidated.

Andrew was still investigating that murder at this present date, also hoping to come up with other witnesses who were not afraid to testify against these gangland kingpins. Andrew remained pessimistic.

Andrew reached down and turned on the heater in his car to warm; he would have loved to stay in bed on this cold morning, however, he had just made Detective, and being a Detective brought new responsibilities. In addition—being a Detective—gave him an extra week's holiday in a year, and a bigger pension at the end of his career. Nevertheless, those types of things did not mean much to Andrew, he thought of them as a by-product of being a Detective, to which one could enjoy, if one wanted.

Unlike a normal Garda, who was a police officer of the Gardai, (Police force in Ireland) who would only attend a murder scene if they were on duty. Detectives were on duty twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. It did not matter if they were attending a wedding, or it was their day off. If there was a significant enough of a situation, the Detectives would have to attend.

Andrew being a big man was six foot, well built, starting to grey a bit on top, but he did not mind, he thought it made him look sexy. He would sometimes stand staring at himself in the mirror, imagining himself as James Bond, one of his boyhood heroes. Andrew now being thirty-

eight years of age, unmarried, but he did not mind that either, he reckoned marriage got in the way of things, especially his career.

In fact, he thought, *that if I had ever married, I would not have made Detective. I would still be walking the streets as a Garda.*

Andrew does have a friend named Carla Drummer, though. You could call her his love interest. Well, that is what she thought. However, Andrew was very tight personally, at letting other people in, and never let her get too close. He used her for sex every now and again, which pissed her off, but she reckoned she was not going to change him now; she had tried for the past five years, with no success.

Andrews' mother had died when he was young and soon after, his father became an alcoholic. Therefore, Andrew closed his heart off to everyone. Sometimes Carla felt like she was getting in, as she felt Andrew let his guard down on numerous occasions. However, just as quick, Andrew would put back on his armour.

People also found it hard to humour him, especially his work mates, they had tried many times, but Andrew never laughed, so they just left him alone.

The only person Andrew really got on with was his Superintendent. His Superintendent had pushed him to become a Detective. He was like a father figure to Andrew. Andrew would also go around to the Superintendents house for Sunday lunch whenever he was not on duty.

Andrew liked to dress well. Since he got his pay rise from his promotion, he decided, *no more uniforms for me, suits will be my closet now, neatly pressed*. There would not even be a hair out of place on his head. In addition, he was all ways clean-shaven. Andrew presented himself well, at all times.

There was one thing about him though that other people found strange. Andrew liked to laugh at his own jokes, ones that no one else got, not even Carla. People would say he has a sick sense of humour.

Once he told Carla a joke involving a Doctor and homeless man, she listened attentively. However, when Andrew told her the punch line, she was disgusted that he could even find it funny. Moreover, it all ended in a row between Carla and him.

Andrew made his way through the streets of Dublin in his red, Ford Granada. It was a car he had fallen in love with the very first time he seen one been driven in the city. Therefore, Andrew decided to purchase, when he got his pay rise. Sometimes his neighbours would see him, and laugh at him, standing outside his apartment, just staring at the car. Sometimes Andrew would spend anything up to an hour just pacing around the car, admiring his pride and joy.

The car carried a two-point eight-litre petrol engine. The roar from the exhaust scared Andrew by times, *a beast waiting to be unleashed and I am the one holding that leash*, thought he.

Andrew was tipping along at a respectable speed, when he noticed out his passenger side window, a man in a long grey trench coat, staring back at him from the sidewalk. The stranger followed him with his eyes as Andrew passed. Andrew even watched him disappear in his rear view mirror; the stranger never took his eyes off Andrew's car. *Unusual* thought Andrew to himself, *I do not recognise that man, but I get the impression that that man recognises me.*

Andrew eventually arrived at the crime scene. He pulled up and parked his Granada alongside a Garda squad car. Andrew then exited the vehicle.

“Keep an eye on the car for me,” he said to a young Garda standing nearby.

Andrew then closed the door in a way that would not damage it. He had closed it so softly; he had to re-examine it closely, to make sure it shut properly. Andrew had more respect for his cars than he had for his women. He sometimes feels like he was living in a material world.

Every Saturday morning the car would get the star treatment. First a wash, and then it would be dried off with a leather shimmy. Then finally, a wax and shine. Nobody else drove the car but himself. Andrew would not trust another soul in the drivers' seat.

The Garda just looked at the Detective, thinking to himself, *what a prick, not even a please or a thank you.*

“Yes sir,” blurted the Garda. The young officer knew he had to be polite to the Detective if he wanted to keep his station. In addition, he knew he had to obey an order from a higher-ranking officer. Even if the orders were, that he had to baby-sit a car. *Not part of the job description* thought the young Garda. Nevertheless, he did not dare protest.

There were uniformed Gardai scattered all over the streets surrounding the crime scene. Some were standing by Garda tape, securing the perimeter, and preventing members of the public from getting too close to the dead bodies, just in case of contamination of the scene. Others were questioning witnesses: people who had come on the two bodies soon after the murders had taken place.

Moreover, others were just standing around doing nothing. Something Andrew felt was a waste of money and resources. Nevertheless, according to procedure, they were a vital part of the investigation. They needed to be there to write up their reports of what other Gardai and Detectives were doing. So that investigating Gardai reports would collaborate with theirs.

Andrew lifted the Garda tape up over his head as he made his way in onto the outer edge of the crime scene.

A Sergeant Mullins then greeted him.

Mullins, a short stout man, a couple of millimetres short for the Gardai. However, his father was high up in the Gardai, a high rank, and of which had granted Mullins entry onto the force. He

was the same age as Andrew. They first met each other at Templemore: a training College for young men entering the Gardai. Unlike Andrew, Mullins had got married after graduation, had two children, and was happy with his position as Sergeant.

Although Andrew and Mullins were friends, of which Andrew had very few in the force, he all ways referred to and called Mullins by his rank. *Probably just being professional to the job* thought Mullins, so in turn, Mullins referred to and called Andrew by his rank.

“What have we, Sergeant?” began Andrew without saying hello.

“Two victims. One Caucasian female, I am guessing late twenties, disembowelled and her throat cut. The other is a Caucasian male, mid thirties, appears to have a sustained a stab wound to the head. There are no other visible wounds. Both bodies, I reckon could be four ... maybe five hours deceased,’ replied Mullins, as he walked with Andrew.

“Any witnesses?” asked Andrew.

“Yes, the male victim. I reckon that is why he is dead, as both bodies appear to have different wounds. The male looks like a panic attack.”

“I meant any witnesses to both murders?”

“No.”

“Would the person or persons who reported finding the bodies, not be witnesses?”

“Yes, sorry, one witness. He is the one who called it in.”

“The bodies been touched yet?”

“No, nobody has been near them yet,” replied Mullins.

“What’s the story on the State Pathologist?” questioned Andrew.

“Doctor Sean Harrison is on his way; he is about ten, maybe fifteen minutes. I telephoned him personally, when I got here,” said Mullins.

“Good, I will want a few minutes with the bodies myself,” said Andrew.

Andrew took a good look around. *It is dark but I can still see enough with the streetlights*, he thought.

“Yes, Detective,” blurted Mullins.

“Who called it in again? Are they available for an interview?” asked Andrew, as he continued to survey the crime scene.

“A young barman, by the name of John Nichols. He was on his way to work in a night-club a few blocks from here. He is over there with one of the officers,” replied Mullins, as he pointed in the direction of the young bartender.

Andrew turned to see, and get a look at the bartender. However, a strange man, looking at him, distracted him. Andrew had seen the same man on the sidewalk on his way to the crime scene. However, this time the stranger was wearing a button down, peak cap on his head.

Andrew turned to walk toward the stranger. However, the man quickly turned and disappeared. Andrew watched him walk away until he lost sight, then turned his attention back to Mullins.

“Don’t let the young barman go anywhere, I’m going to want to speak with him,” said Andrew, as he turned back to the crime scene. He then advanced toward the two bodies.

Andrew walked out into the middle of the crime scene, stopping directly half way between the two corpses. Looking down, he scanned the immediate area below and around his feet. Nothing caught the detectives’ eye. Then Andrew turned very slowly through a three hundred and sixty degrees, taking in everything he saw, into his photographic memory.

Cobble stoned street, sidewalks with streetlights on both sides. Andrew guessed the street was about four hundred and fifty metres long. It had a T-junction at both ends, leading out onto streets that were more primary. He looked up; *this is a back street, an alley. Part of a block, with*

rear entrances to public houses, shops, and a restaurant. Bins lined the sidewalks with two or three designated to each doorway. Cardboard lay strewn beside the bins. Andrew noticed that the streetlight on the right hand side of the street, beside the male victim was out, which darkened the area considerably, where the two bodies lay.

Trying to piece together in his head as to what may have happened here, Andrew concentrated his attention on the three bins beside what he considered the first victim (the young female). *She must have been surprised. There does not seem to be any sign of a struggle, either on the victims' body or to the surrounding area where she is lying. An Aiwa Cassette Walkman lay by her feet. She must have dropped it when her assailant attacked her. Andrew doubted it belonged to the murderer, to noticeable of evidence to leave behind.*

Three bins sat against the wall in the darkest area of the street, with a gap between the second and third bin. The name Reynolds was printed in large letters on the front of the bins. Andrew recalled seeing a bin lorry in the city with that same name doing their rounds on a Thursday and Friday morning. However, that could be different this time of the year with it being so close to Christmas.

Andrew walked over to the bins and looked between the second and third bin. There was a beer crate placed between them, *unusual* he thought, *generally beer crates would be stacked together, not one thrown on its own.* Andrew looked around, but there was no more to be seen anywhere on the street. *Maybe the empties are already collected. Nevertheless, why did they forget this one?*

Andrew thought for a moment, then turned his back to the bins, and began to back himself in to sit on the beer crate.

He did not fit.

Andrew then straightened back up and called to Mullins to come over to where he was standing.

Mullins was by the detective's side in seconds.

"What size is our barman, Sergeant, or, sorry, what kind of build is he?" questioned Andrew.

Mullins looked at Andrew confusingly. *What size is our barman? What kind of question is that?*

What the build of the bartender had to do with the murders did not make sense to Mullins, but he did not question the question.

"He's about five foot six, quite light, ten, maybe eleven stone."

"Good, he will do. Fetch him for me," replied Andrew.

"Yes detective, right away."

Mullins disappeared for a minute, then arrived back with the young bartender in tow.

“What’s your name son?” asked Andrew.

“John. John Nichols sir,” replied the shy and timid young man.

“Good. John can you do me a favour, and sit on that beer crate for me,” said the Detective as he pointed in at the crate between the two bins. “Now make sure you do not touch anything else, other than your ass on the crate, okay?”

“Yeah, no problem,” replied John.

The bartender backed his way in between the two bins. He was a perfect fit. He then sat his ass on the crate.

Andrew hunched down, and then pulled out the cardboard, which lay against the bin in front of the crate. He proceeded to cover the young bartender with the cardboard, then stood back.

“I would not even know John was in there. Look Sergeant, our perpetrator was waiting here for his victim. The young female was the victim, the main target, and the male must have arrived, maybe just after our perp had killed her. That is why he never ran. He was not sure as to what had happened. He must have been offering help when our perp killed him,” declared Andrew.

“Good theory, Detective,” replied Mullins.

The sergeant could see now as to the use of the young bartender. Mullins was impressed.

“The perpetrator lay in wait here for our victim. He must have known her. He knew that she used this street for where ever she was going. Find out exactly whom the female victim is, where she was going, and where she was coming from?” said Detective Young.

“Yes, Detective. We’re on it at the moment, should have the answers in a few minutes.”

“Can I come out now?” said a voice from behind the cardboard.

Andrew looked down, and gave a little smile.

“Yes, come out. Sorry, I nearly forgot about you,” said Andrew, as he offered out his hand to the young bartender. Andrew then gave him a pull up from where he was sitting.

“Before you go anywhere. Did you see anything, or anyone suspicious when you found the bodies,” questioned Andrew.

“No, not tonight. About a week ago on my way to work, I did see a man hanging around this street. It was quite funny really. He was talking to himself. He was having a good auld chin wag.”

Andrew laughed. He had not heard that saying—having a good auld chin wag—in a long time. He remembered his grandmother used it a lot.

“What was he saying?” asked Andrew, when he regained his concentration back to the matter at hand.

“I can’t remember. I did not pay much attention. I don’t usually stop and talk to strangers, especially those who talk to themselves,” replied the young Bartender.

“Can you remember what he looked like? What he was wearing?” asked Andrew.

John thought for a few seconds.

“Yeah, vaguely. He was well dressed. He wore a suit like you, Detective. He was maybe, my height. A small bit heavier than me, but was the same build as me. He had blonde hair, actually it was nearly white. It was very bright. That’s all I can remember,” said John.

“Did you get a look at his face, John?”

Andrew listened very attentively to the bartender now.

“No, sorry,” replied John.

“Thank you, John,” said Andrew.

He then turned back to Mullins.

“Sergeant, that is our perpetrator right there. He sussed this street out before the night of the killing. Get some officers to question the owners and staff of all the businesses in the area. See if they seen anything unusual in the past week. Also, talk to Dublin City Council. Find out how long that streetlight has been out, and get an artist to draw up a rough photo fit with what information we have. In addition, find out when Reynolds waste disposal empty the bins on this street. See if any of the bin men saw anything suspicious.”

“ Will do, I am on it straight away Detective,” said Mullins, with a hint of excitement in his voice.

The young bartender put his hand on Andrews’ shoulder, then asked nervously, “sorry, Detective. What am I going to tell my boss? I mean, what happened to me tonight? I have not turned in for work?”

“Oh, he doesn’t know yet?” asked Andrew.

“No sir,” replied the timid Bartender.

“All right, give his number to Sergeant Mullins, and he will call him for you, okay.”

“Thank you, Detective.”

“No, thank you, John. You have been a great help. I’ll contact you if I have anymore questions.”

John left his boss’s number with Sergeant Mullins, and went on about getting home.

The state pathologist Doctor Harrison had just arrived and had proceeded to examine the bodies. Sean Harrison was a short thin man, mid fifties. He wore a beard and was balding on top. In addition, like Andrew, he was unmarried, too consumed in his work to have time for anything else.

Andrew stood at a distance, watching the Doctor work this part of the investigation. The forensics fascinated the Detective. It was something he would have loved to have done. But when it all came down to choosing, the appeal of the chase was more rewarding to the Detective, than sitting in a lab examining evidence.

When Doctor Harrison was finished with his visual examination, he called in the Detective.

“Hello, Detective Young, how are you?” he began.

“Good, well what have you got Doctor?” replied Andrew, getting straight down to business with little small talk.

“Our first victim has a wallet with some identification. It gives an address in Lanesborough, Co. Roscommon. However, I reckon she is now living in Dublin. Her name is Barbara Smith. She is twenty-eight years old. Jesus, she is quite young. Pity to have died at such a young age, do you not think? The second victim has no identification. However, he is carrying a substantial amount of money. Leading me to believe that this was not a robbery, as both victims do not seem to be missing any personal belongings. The female victim had her lower abdomen slashed and throat cut. The male appears to have a stab wound to the head. Both appear that a sharp object was used, possibly a knife. Does not appear to be anymore visible wounds from what I can see, pending further examination, of course. Very violent deaths, do you not think, Detective? Something of which, I have never encountered before. After that, that’s all I have for the moment, and I won’t have any more information until I get to do a full autopsy on both bodies.”

“Thank you, Doctor Harrison. I will get in contact with you after dinner, later today. I’d like to know what kind of knife the perpetrator used, and I need that information as soon as possible,” said Andrew.

“I will let you know as quickly as I can, Detective. I cannot perform miracles, you know,” said the Doctor.

Andrew then turned back to Mullins again.

“Sergeant, we have a name to one of the victims, Barbara Smith. The Doctor will give you the information. Can you get someone to get in contact with next of kin and question them too? Find out if she works, and if she does, where she works in the City. Track down and question all work-mates and Friends,” said Andrew.

“Yes sir,” blurted Mullins.

“I am going home to get a few hours sleep, Sergeant. So, I will see you in a few hours. Okay, I am out of here,” said Andrew, as he walked away from the crime scene. He lifted the Garda tape over his head, as he passed under it, and made his way back to his car.

“Okay, thanks. I’ll see you then,” said Mullins.

Andrew thanked the Garda watching his car. He then got into it, and drove home.

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