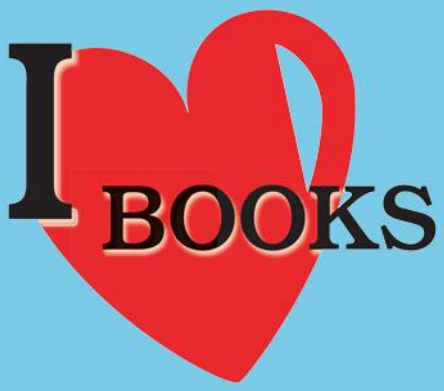


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Opening extract from

Gunpoint

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Chapter 1
999

Alex was cramped in the roof space of the Town Hall with her plans and her tool bag. She had just set out the water pipes when she heard the shout from below.

"Put your hands up! Stay still! If anyone moves, we shoot!"

Alex shifted the pipes to one side, went to the roof hatch and looked down.

She could see the scaffolding she and her dad had put up so they could get into the roof space to upgrade the water pipes. The room below had a very high ceiling like all the rooms in the Town Hall. It was a very old building.

Two men stood next to the scaffolding. Their faces were covered with black masks and they had lined up everyone in the room against a wall. Ten people stood with their hands up. One of them was Alex's dad! The two men were pointing guns at him and the others.



Alex moved back from the hatch into the darkness of the roof space. Her heart pounded as she took out her mobile and rang 999.

"I'm at the Town Hall in Albert Street," she whispered. "There are armed men here. They've taken ten people hostage. One of them's my dad ..."

Voices from below interrupted her and she looked down again. One of the gunmen was on his phone too.

"We're in the Town Hall and we're armed," he said. "We've got ten hostages. You've got an hour to release Ken Bull from prison. Do

it now. If you don't, we start shooting. Never mind my name – you can call me Mr Blue."