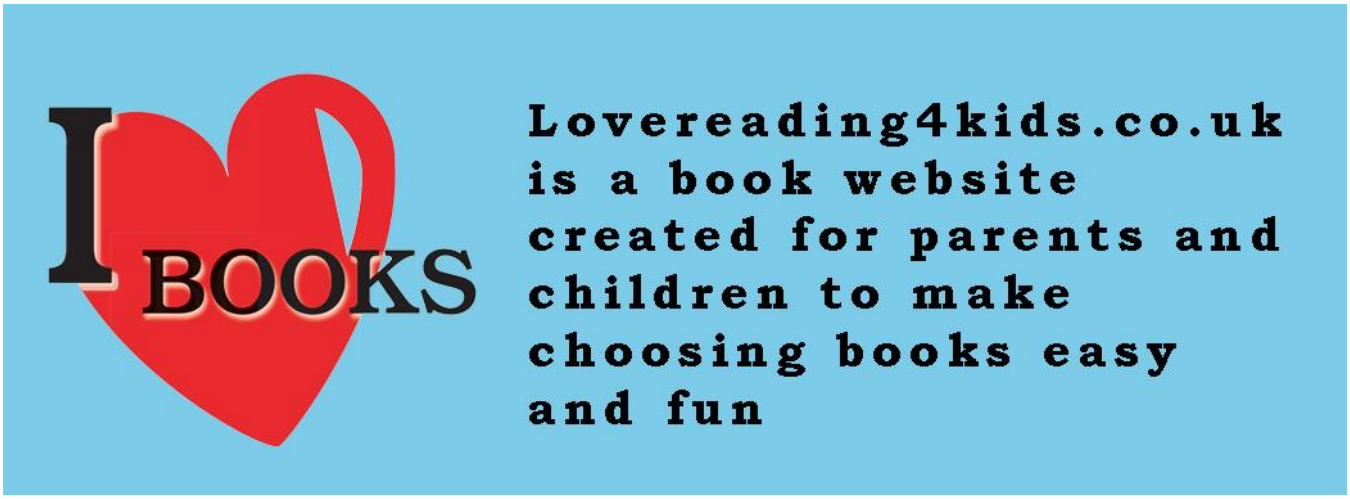


Opening extract from

Between the Lies

Written by

Cathy MacPhail

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Lovereading4kids.co.uk

For Katie and Danny,
with love and thanks

A special thank you to Vassilios
for his help and advice

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How long have I been here? I've lost track of time.
Nobody's coming. Nobody knows where I am.
Why was I so stupid? Please... somebody help me.
I've been screaming so loud my throat hurts and still nobody hears me. I'm afraid to scream now.
Because it's even darker, and what if... what if the person who comes is *that* person.
I'm trying not to panic.
But what if nobody ever finds me?
Can't think like that or I'll go mad.
No, I will be saved. Hold onto that thought.
Someone will find me.
Someone has to.

ONE



Greater Glasgow Police

Appeal for Information: Missing Teen – Port Glasgow area

Police Scotland are appealing for information to help trace a fourteen-year-old girl. Judith Tremayne is missing from her home in Port Glasgow. She was last seen on Friday around 18.00.

Judith is described as tall for her age, with long brown hair and brown eyes. She was last seen wearing a green jacket, a t-shirt and blue jeans. Her parents have said it is completely out of character for Judith not to be in contact with them or her friends. Officers are becoming increasingly concerned for her welfare.

Anyone with information please contact the Greenock police station immediately.

247 168 71

Greater Glasgow Police

Appeal for Information: Missing Teen…

andreaglass15 shared **Greater Glasgow Police**'s post

If anyone has any information about my bestezt friend, Jude, please can you come forward. Anything at all. Please share this post. We have to find her.

27 8 9

xtraceymullanx shared **andreaglass15**'s post

Jude if you're reading this, please get in touch.

14 6 2

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belindab25 commented:

Everybody is worried sick about you.

0

And that was how it all began, with Judith being reported missing. Our school, St Thomas High, was buzzing with the news on the Monday. Groups gathering in the corridors, girls gossiping in the toilets, everyone sharing everything online.

The same photo peered out of everyone's posts: Jude, with her long hair draped over her shoulders, her big eyes wide, her mouth open as if she was just about to catch a fish. Bet she would hate that photo, I thought. Jude Tremayne was vain. Always liked to look her best. And that definitely wasn't her best shot.

Everyone was speculating about why she had gone.

"I heard she had a fight with her parents."

"She was always fighting with them," Andrea, her so-called 'bestezt' friend, admitted through tears. "They're a weird couple. All they ever want to do is trek through the wild. And camp. They were always dragging Jude off somewhere she didn't want to go."

"Maybe that's why she ran away. Maybe she hitched a lift to Benidorm."

Everyone laughed. Even Andrea. Though she tried to look guilty about it.

The chat went from drama to comedy as quickly as that, then back to drama.

"Maybe she didn't hitch a lift. She might have been snatched. There's a lot of creepy people about. If she walked along the waterfront at the port, no one could see from the street. Anybody could have got her." I thought I heard a little bit of hope in Tracey

Mullan's voice. Tracey was another so-called best friend of Jude's. She had a pale voice to match her pale face and hair. I always thought she looked as if the colour had been drained out of her.

"She's only been gone a couple of days. They'll probably find her holed up with her auntie in Glasgow, watching all the attention she's getting on the news."

Andrea tried to stifle a giggle. I could tell she didn't want anyone to think she saw the funny side of this. "That's a terrible thing to say, as if she would do anything like that."

"Jude's not a cruel person," Big Belinda Brown agreed. She always agreed with Andrea. She shook her head. "No, I'm with Tracey. I think she's been snatched." She said it as if it was the worst possible scenario, but definitely the one she'd enjoy the most.

"No," Andrea said. "She'll come back."

We all knew if Jude didn't come back it would only get worse (or better, depending on your point of view).

I didn't take part in the conversation, only listened, standing apart from the rest in the corridor outside the toilets. I was always apart from the rest; nobody wanted Abbie Knox to be part of their group.

Jude was no particular friend of mine, after all. I had no particular friends in this school. My dad and I only moved here a few months ago when he got a job at Greenock. Before that, we lived in Glasgow. Mind you, I hadn't had many friends at my Glasgow school either. No-mates-Abbie. That was me.

But I listened with interest.



Jude didn't come back. According to the news, she was spotted everywhere.

Missing girl seen on Aberdeen Megabus

Girl matching Judith Tremayne's description seen on London train

Has Jude Tremayne joined ISIS? Glasgow teen may have gone to Syria

That week it was all we talked about.

"Would she really run away because of a fight with her parents?" I asked some of the girls in class.

"She's a drama queen," I was told. "Judith Tremayne would turn burnt toast into a drama."

"She was always looking for attention," someone else said.

"Well, maybe she's doing it to get her parents' attention. Maybe she feels they've been neglecting her."

I looked at the girl who said that. Frances Delaney. Older than me by a couple of years, she was one of those girls that other girls seem to flock around, follow, copy. They all wanted to be like her.

She came in one day with a designer bag hung on her elbow, and the next day almost every girl was carrying a designer bag around. Frances had fair hair that always looked tousled. She'd pin it up on top of her head, but strands of it would hang untidily on her shoulders. You could sit for hours aiming to get your hair like Frances's, but you'd still never manage it. I know; I've tried. Yes, even me, Abbie Knox, the outsider. The day I came in with my black hair tousled, thinking I looked exactly like a black-haired double of Frances, someone told me I had a bed head, and should get out my brush and fix it. Never did that again.

Frances always wore high heels. You heard her coming before you saw her, clattering along the

corridors or up the winding steel stairs to the top floor. Other girls tried to copy that too. But have you ever tried to walk in high heels? Everyone either toppled over, or tripped up. It was comical to watch. And they got told not to wear high heels to school. But Frances seemed to walk in her heels with ease and somehow avoided being told off.

Frances waved her hands around as she talked about Jude. Her long fingers and almond-shaped nails fascinated me. "She wants her mum and dad to miss her, so when she comes back they'll welcome her with open arms and apologise, even though they haven't done anything wrong." She held out her arms as if she was welcoming a child: "Oh darlink, come to Mamma." Her accent became foreign. "I vill never take you camping again!" And she clutched an imaginary Jude to her bosom.

"I thought you liked her, Frances," I said.

She looked surprised. "I do, actually. She's harmless. She can be a bit silly, though, and easily led."

Someone called out, "Put it this way, she's not the brightest bulb on the Christmas tree."

Everyone laughed.

Frances went on. "You can like someone and still see their faults. I like everybody. Don't I, girls?"

And all her coven of friends laughed and agreed with her.

Actually, the truth was that everybody liked Frances. I'd never heard anyone say a bad word about her.

"Bet she doesn't like me," I said in a whisper, but it turned out the boy standing beside me, Robbie Grant, was close enough to hear.

"Does anybody?"

"Thanks for that, Robbie." Robbie never failed to get my back up. We should have got along: we were both loners, always in some kind of trouble.

He shrugged. "You've never fallen under the Frances spell, or hung on her every word, like they do."

He nodded across to where Frances seemed to be leading her friends down the corridor like the *Queen Mary* sailing off followed by a flotilla of small boats.

Maybe Robbie was right. I had never been interested in following anyone. Nor did I want to be a leader. I just wanted to be me. A loner. That was my problem. I didn't even have a best friend. But I did like watching things from a distance: the observer, watching and listening. And Judith's disappearance was the most interesting thing that had happened in yonks.