ANTHONY KESSEL

Just one word: 'Edie'.

it was the handwriting.

Unquestionably, it

the next clue is underneath



was her mum's.

DON'T DOUBT THE RAINBOW



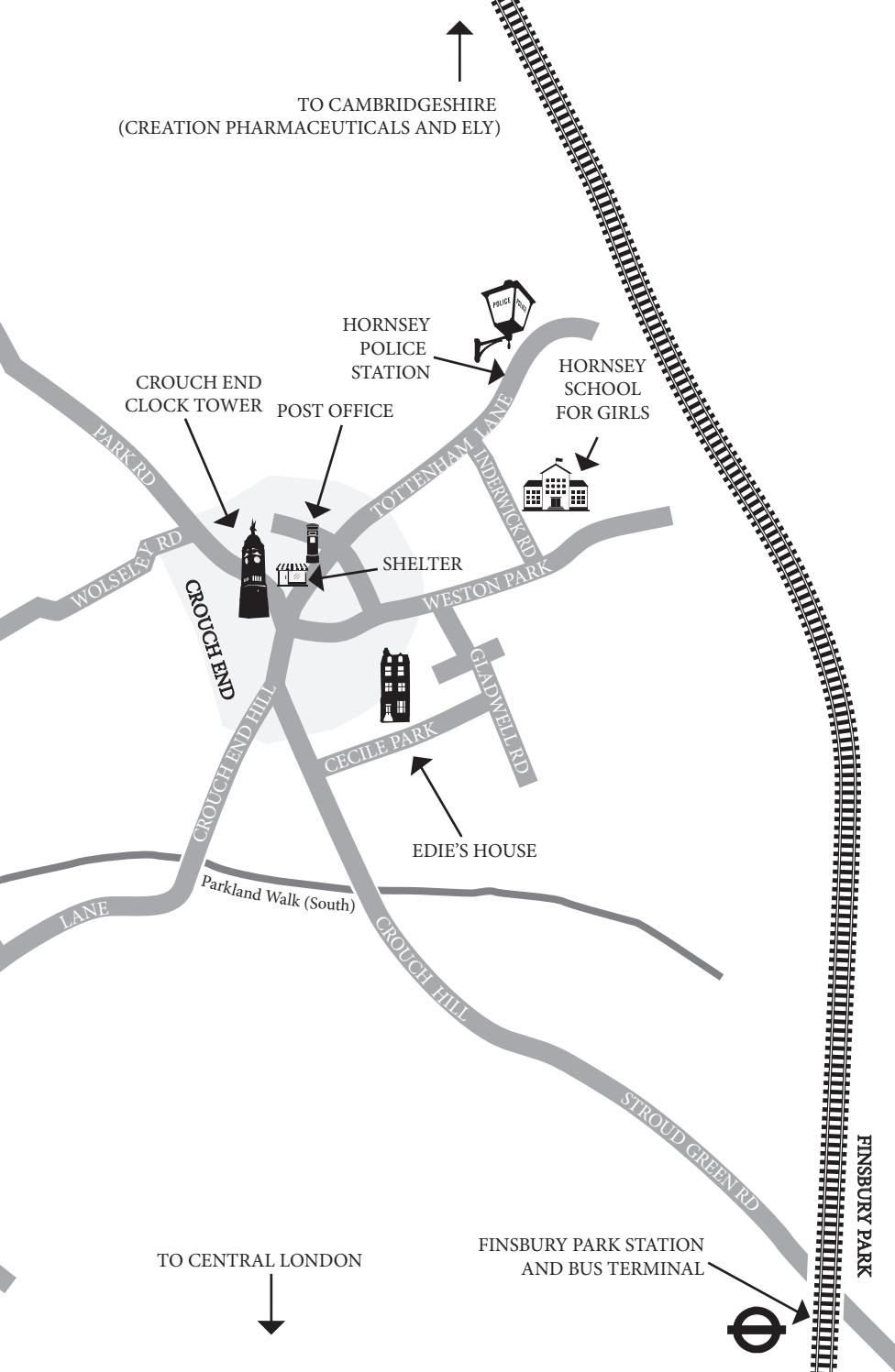
two words on the front cover stood out starkly:

MURDER CARDS.





an understanding of how the mind works


TO CAMBRIDGESHIRE
(CREATION PHARMACEUTICALS AND ELY)
HORNSEY
POLICE
STATION
HORNSEY
SCHOOL
FOR GIRLS
CROUCH END
CLOCK TOWER
POST OFFICE
PARK RD
TOTTENHAM LANE
UNDERWICK RD
WOLSELEY RD
SHELTER
WESTON PARK
CROUCH END
GLADWELL RD
CROUCH END HILL
CECILE PARK
EDIE'S HOUSE
LANE
Parkland Walk (South)
CROUCH HILL
STROUD GREEN RD
FINSBURY PARK
TO CENTRAL LONDON
FINSBURY PARK STATION
AND BUS TERMINAL

ANTHONY
KESSEL

DON'T DOUBT THE RAINBOW



Crown House Publishing Limited
www.crownhouse.co.uk

First published by
Crown House Publishing Limited
Crown Buildings, Bancyfelin, Carmarthen, Wales, SA33 5ND, UK
www.crownhouse.co.uk

and

Crown House Publishing Company LLC
PO Box 2223, Williston, VT 05495, USA
www.crownhousepublishing.com

© Anthony S. Kessel, 2021

The right of Anthony S. Kessel to be identified as the author of this work has been asserted by him in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

Cover illustration © Nina Tara, 2021.

The right of Nina Tara to be identified as the illustrator of this work has been asserted by her in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

First published 2021.

Pen text break image © Frolova Polina – stock.adobe.com. Envelope text break image © designfgb – stock.adobe.com. Detective image, page 288 © GraphicsRF – stock.adobe.com. Magnifying glass image, page 288 © Musicman80 – stock.adobe.com

All rights reserved. Except as permitted under current legislation no part of this work may be photocopied, stored in a retrieval system, published, performed in public, adapted, broadcast, transmitted, recorded or reproduced in any form or by any means, without the prior permission of the copyright owners. Enquiries should be addressed to Crown House Publishing.

Crown House Publishing has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue entry for this book is available from the British Library.

Print ISBN 978-178583555-1
Mobi ISBN 978-178583557-5
ePub ISBN 978-178583558-2
ePDF ISBN 978-178583559-9

LCCN 2021932197

Printed in the UK by
Clays Ltd, Bungay, Suffolk

To Mum and Dad
No longer here, but always here

CONTENTS

How It All Started ..... *iii*

Chapter 1. From Beyond the Grave 1
Chapter 2. The Note 15
Chapter 3. David and Goliath 35
Chapter 4. Breadcrumbs 47
Chapter 5. Detective Work 57
Chapter 6. Doctors 71
Chapter 7. Blood on the Tracks 85
Chapter 8. Intruder 113
Chapter 9. From Hero to Zero 129
Chapter 10. Collision Course 149
Chapter 11. The Public's Health 169
Chapter 12. School Trip 187
Chapter 13. Kidnapped 211
Chapter 14. Resolution 229
Chapter 15. Last Rites 251
Chapter 16. The Parkland Walk 269
Chapter 17. Edie Marble: Supersleuth 281

Note from the Author *303*
Acknowledgements *307*

HOW IT ALL STARTED

'Shall we start in Marie Curie, Cancer Research or just go straight to Shelter?' asked Mum, as we walked down Gladwell Road towards the centre of Crouch End.

'Straight to Shelter!' I exclaimed, grinning. 'They always have the best stuff.'

With Dad and Eli watching football on the telly, Mum and I had developed a weekend habit of sauntering into Crouch End and, best of all, browsing around the charity shops for hidden treasure. I also loved our coffee shop chats after the shopping, when Mum would share with me her latest human rights investigations. She was so passionate about standing up for people and making the world a better place, and some of her stories were incredible: corruption in government, workers being taken advantage of, the dumping of toxic waste. Mum said that Dad and Eli weren't interested, but I couldn't get enough – and I even helped her out sometimes. She once joked that if she wasn't careful I'd take over her job!

I knew the walk by heart: cross over Landrock to Drylands Road, left on Weston Park, right down Elder Avenue and left onto Tottenham Lane. From there, we marched down the busy high street, past the Post Office and made a sharp right through the red door into affordable shopping heaven. Inside, our pattern was well established: we split up, perused what was on offer separately, then shared our findings. According to Dad, I rifled through the clothing

racks in a manner identical to Mum. I told him he watched football just like Eli.

I'd gathered a pretty blue cotton blouse and silver earrings by the time Mum beckoned me over. She'd found a book of puzzles – for a daughter who loved problem-solving – plus an old paperback.

'This is one of my all-time favourites,' Mum pronounced. 'I read it when I was …' she sized me up with a smile, 'maybe a year or two older than you.'

I looked down at the cover: '*The Midwich Cuckoos*,' I probed.

Mum took a moment, which she often did, before replying: 'People think that John Wyndham was just a science fiction author because of *Day of the Triffids*, but he was much more than that. He wrote about how people behave when put in unusual circumstances – and what lengths they'll go to in order to survive.'

I thought that through and then asked: 'So what's this one about?'

I could sense Mum's mind ticking over. 'It's been a while but … as I remember … in a quiet English village the minds of children are taken over by an alien force, which then exerts telepathic control over objects and humans.'

'Sounds horrible!' I reacted.

'You should read the book,' Mum continued. 'They made it into a creepy black-and-white movie in the sixties called *Village of the Damned*.'

'I'm not sure I fancy it right now, Mum. I've only just finished *Lord of the Flies* … which was pretty disturbing.'

But Mum paid no attention and leant in: 'You should read it.'

'Mum, I don't really want to—' I started to explain.

'Read it!' Mum pressed in a louder voice, completely out of character. Other customers looked over in concern.

I started feeling anxious and became aware of a pounding in my chest. Something wasn't right.

'Read it!!' Mum repeated insistently, her eyes now glazed and intense.

No, something really wasn't right. I'd had this dream a few times before and Mum had never behaved like this. In fact, this was the only dream that brought back good memories, at least until I returned to reality.

'Read it!!' Mum urged again, but her words were entangled, confused, a combination of forcefulness and plea. I looked down, on the verge of tears, and the book seemed to have disappeared, replaced by something else on her palm.

'Read *me*!!' Mum demanded oddly, but I'd had enough. I needed to wake up and get out of the dream. Right now. And I did – eventually.

What I didn't know then, however, was that this dream would be the moment – the very moment, a year after Mum's death – when my world would transform yet again. When, over the next few weeks, I would change from regular schoolgirl to national celebrity and star detective.

Along the way I've become stronger, tougher and more self-aware. But I've seen things that nobody, let alone someone my age, should ever see.

My name is Edie Marble, and this is my story.



CHAPTER 1

FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE

Unable to sleep, Edie lay in bed and tried not to think about the day she'd been dreading for weeks. Staring at the ceiling, she wondered about what determined the different things that happened to different people: whether you had a brother or a sister, whether you were born into a slum in the suburbs of New Delhi or a privileged home in north London, whether you were popular at school or not, whether your mum lived or died.

Eventually, Edie's dad came into the room.

'How are you feeling?' he asked, perching on the edge of Edie's bed.

'Okay,' Edie replied, although 'numb' would have been a truer answer.

'I know this will be a hard day,' Dad continued, gently touching her hand. 'But we'll get through it together and move on.'

The evidence around Edie suggested that nobody had moved on yet. Her brother Eli, who was now ten, had withdrawn into his shell since Mum's death. He refused to talk about her or even join in looking at old photographs. Although he had friends, Eli seemed increasingly to prefer playing alone. And he wetted his bed – not every night, but two or three times a week since the tragedy. Dad had done his

utmost to keep everything together, but he was still suffering badly himself. In the evenings, Edie sometimes heard her dad sobbing quietly in the lounge, turning up the volume on the TV to mask the noise. He'd immersed himself in work and was drinking more whisky than ever.

As for herself, Edie knew that she hadn't moved on yet and still couldn't understand – truly understand – why her world had been turned upside down. Edie woke up every day thinking about Mum and fell asleep comforted by the image of her mother – her beautiful, dark-haired, dark-eyed mother – stroking her hair. Edie's schoolwork had suffered and her friends didn't seem to know what to say to her. Worst, perhaps, were the nightmares that just wouldn't go away.



Edie eventually managed to drag herself out of bed, put on her slippers and a fleece, and made her way downstairs. On the last step, still half asleep, Edie slipped and lost her footing. She gasped and looked down at the Buffy slippers with their poor grip. Mum had bought them the week before she died and seemed to find them cute. It was just like Mum, so busy with her own work that she didn't realise the vampire slayer was old news.

'Crunchy Nut cornflakes?' asked Dad, too perkily for this day.

'I'm not hungry,' Edie replied.

'You've got to eat something, luv,' he continued. 'It's going to be a long day. What about your favourite, one of those Müller yoghurts?'

'I'm not hungry,' Edie repeated more firmly. She glanced over at Eli sitting quietly at the table, munching on some peanut-buttery toast. He seemed oblivious to it all, concentrating on the football pages of the newspaper. Inside, though, she knew he was anxious.

'I'll make you something else then, maybe some eggs on—'

Edie raised her voice further. 'I told you, I'm not hungry!' After a short-lived but fierce glare, Edie grabbed something from the fridge then turned defiantly and left the kitchen for the playroom.

It was here that Edie found solace, not just on this day but often since her mum had died. In truth, it wasn't the playroom that provided the comfort but what lay right outside on the outdoor decking. Edie opened the back door, took a couple of steps into the garden, crouched down and looked inside the cage.

'Where are you Günther, my little fella?' she called.

A shuffle of claws on wood, the shifting of straw and her treasured guinea pig's face popped out from the bedding. Edie released the cage door, felt around and pulled out her cuddly brown and white friend. Back inside the playroom, she held him up to her chest and peered into his eyes. Günther squeaked at her lovingly, twitching his little whiskers. 'What's it like to be a guinea pig?' Edie wondered momentarily, then instinctively knew the answer: a lot less complicated than being a human.

Edie sat on the sofa and stroked her warm companion's furry back as he gazed around the room. Günther nibbled on

the carrot Edie had brought from the fridge, then decided he preferred her fleece zipper. His little claws held on to her thumb. Fifteen minutes of quiet affection, including changing his water and food and freshening up his hay, was all Edie needed in the mornings. By then, she normally felt emotionally refreshed. Today, however, Edie lingered, until interrupted by a shout from the next room.

'Come on, luv – we're leaving at nine o'clock.'

Taking her time, Edie placed Günther carefully back in his cage, locked the door and went back upstairs to get dressed.



'What does a thirteen-year-old girl wear for a stone-setting?' Edie pondered as she rummaged through her wardrobe. The sombre occasion marked a year after a person's death in the Jewish religion, probably meaning similar clothes to a funeral, so Edie picked out black tights, a grey sleeveless dress with thick shoulder-straps and a white long-sleeved T-shirt to go underneath. Another reminder: her mum had bought her this dress for an eco-award ceremony a month before her death, where she'd been given a prize for exposing a water pollution scandal. Just the two of them went, as Dad had been on call for the surgery, and Edie had been so proud of her mum.

Last, Edie opened the top drawer of her bedside table and reached for the ceramic dish that contained her few items of jewellery. Edie picked out the heart-shaped locket that Mum had given her on her eleventh birthday. The locket

had originally belonged to Edie's mum's mother – or Mama, as the kids called her – and had been lovingly handed down. The gold was tarnished and the chain had been replaced, but the locket still opened with a crisp click to reveal a tiny old photo of Mum as a young teenager. Edie had carefully cut out and inserted that photo the day before the funeral, and Edie wore the locket at those times when she really needed her mum's presence. A day like today.

Downstairs they were still getting ready. Eli was wearing an olive coloured shirt and brown corduroy trousers which made him look too grown-up and silly. Her dad wore a dark-blue suit, white shirt and plain tie. Always appropriate, never wanting to stick out. The doorbell rang.

'Are we ready, then?' Dad asked. Nobody answered.

'Come on, kids,' Dad continued. 'Let's not make this harder than it needs to be.'

Eli put on his black school shoes and Edie was about to do likewise, but then noticed her brown calf-length suede boots which would be more comfortable for trudging around the cemetery.

As Edie reached for her warm school coat something stirred within her, but she couldn't work it out for a moment. Then Edie remembered. It was one of her dreams, a recent one in which she was at the cemetery but she wasn't wearing her school coat. Instead, Edie had on the sheepskin coat her mum had bought for her – the coat Edie had been wearing when the teacher had approached her in the school playground with the forlorn expression of someone bearing dreadful news. The coat Edie associated with that moment

and had never worn since.

Edie bolted upstairs, grabbed the sheepskin from her cupboard and slung it on. She ran back down to join the others in the minicab and off they set.



'Can we watch the game later?' Eli asked, as they snaked through the traffic towards Edgwarebury Cemetery in north London.

Dad didn't answer at first and stared blankly through the window.

'I don't know,' he responded eventually, without averting his look to face the children. 'Let's see how things go and what time we get back.'

'Will Aubameyang be playing?' her brother continued, seemingly oblivious to the gravity of the day.

'Can't you ever stop talking about football?' Edie interrupted angrily. 'We're on the way to Mum's stone-setting and all you can think about is stupid footballers.'

Eli winced for a moment when Edie raised her voice, then just continued to gaze out at the road. He still seemed to be keeping his sadness deep inside.

'I know how hard today is,' Dad said quietly. 'But it's hard for us all, luv. Please try not to take it out on your brother.'

Edie knew her dad was right, but she found it hard and got upset easily. As silence descended, Edie went to that familiar place inside her mind. If her dad had only driven Mum to the appointment that fateful day a year ago, Edie's

world wouldn't have changed forever. Edie remembered almost by heart the conversation she'd overheard. Dad had said he was too busy with work to take Mum to the meeting, though, in truth, they'd argued about her latest human rights investigation. Despite being supportive of Mum's work, Dad felt the latest case was taking a toll. After bickering briefly, they'd eventually settled on a drop-off at Finsbury Park Tube station. Within ten minutes, the Victoria line was closed with a dead person on the tracks.

Edie knew the accident wasn't her dad's fault but she found it hard not to blame him, a little. Right now, though, she needed comforting herself. Tears were welling up as Edie turned to her dad.

'This is the worst day of my life,' she said gently, in a way that invited an embrace.

Edie burst out crying and held on tight, eyes closed. For a few minutes, Dad stroked her back and slowly the tears receded. When the car turned a sharp corner, Edie instinctively reopened her eyes to catch a glimpse of the cemetery gates as they passed by.

'Actually,' she said to her dad. 'It's the second worst day.'



Half an hour later, and with all the preparations done, the crunch of tyres on gravel heralded the arrival of the others. Edie recognised the silver Honda Jazz before Eli blurted out: 'That's Mama and Papa.' Eli ran over to their grandparents and Papa lifted him up. Mama came over and wrapped her arms around Edie. Back came the tears.

Edie's mum's parents, Anya and Maurice (Mama and Papa, according to the kids), had tried to be helpful since the death of their daughter. Although desperate themselves from the tragic occurrence, they'd tried to help Dad, their son-in-law, but he'd been largely resistant. Offers of meals were spurned, conversations rebutted and answerphone messages ignored. The only exception was assistance with the kids: Mama and Papa had been a real support to Edie and Eli, whenever they were given the chance.

Edie was particularly close to her grandmother. Mama was never fazed by Edie's driven nature and was always open to patiently talking things through. Undoubtedly, Edie reminded Mama of her own daughter: strong-willed, passionate and inquisitive. Mama had once remarked: 'One day, Edie, all your questions will get you into trouble – just like your mum!'

On the other side of the family, connections were not so strong. Edie had never known her dad's mother, who'd died before she was born, and Edie's dad's father lived in Toronto – a retired doctor who played golf and kept to himself. Although Grandpa David had made it to England for the funeral, he wasn't here for the stone-setting.

'How are you doing?' Mama asked with concern.

'I just want it to be over,' Edie answered honestly.

Mama looked her straight in the eye. 'Me too,' she said.

The moment of kindred spirit was broken by a tap on Edie's arm. She spun around.

'You came!' exclaimed Edie. 'I was worried that—'

'Of course I came, silly,' was the response. 'I wouldn't

miss this for the world!'

Edie wouldn't have let anybody get away with that kind of comment – except for her best mate, Lizzie, who'd befriended Edie through her transition to Highgate Hill from state school over a year ago. Whilst Edie's other classmates hadn't known how to deal with Edie and her loss, Lizzie kept on trying. Some things worked, some things didn't, but Lizzie wasn't deterred, although her natural kind-heartedness was beginning to be tested. Edie smiled, turned away from Mama and hugged her best friend hard.

'Stay by me through the whole thing,' Edie whispered into Lizzie's ear.

'Just what I was planning,' came the hushed reply. Edie turned to Mama, who gave her a smile that said it was okay if she headed off.

'Is anybody else from school coming?' asked Lizzie, as they made their way around the side of the car park to the back of the main building.

'I didn't ask anyone else,' replied Edie curtly. 'You're the only one I don't mind seeing me in this state.'

'What do you mean – *in this state*?'

Edie contemplated for a moment and then replied truthfully. 'Helpless,' she proclaimed.

Away from the hubbub, the girls watched quietly as people arrived: friends of her parents, whom Edie hardly ever saw any more, plus some of her mum's work colleagues from the human rights movement. Edie recognised a couple of old friends of her dad's – Richard, from Dad's schooldays, and a friend from university, Miles, with his partner, John. Despite

their kindly efforts, Dad had kept them all at a distance as he soldiered on.

Gradually, people stopped arriving and the crowd congregated in the main reception room. Dad called the two girls over. The ordeal was about to begin.



Thinking that today would be a bit like the funeral, Edie had been expecting a repeat of the eulogies of a year ago. Those had been awful: her dad choking his way through heartfelt but restrained words about Mum – what a wonderful wife and mother she'd been, her professional achievements. When he finally got to how much he'd miss her, his voice had cracked and his stare had become locked in the distance. Eventually, Papa had gone over, put an arm around Dad and tenderly led him away. Auntie Ruth, Edie's mum's sister, had been next up but she couldn't get a word out before bursting into uncontrollable tears. Next was a director from Amnesty International, who'd spoken powerfully about Mum's crusading work. Edie had been supposed to follow: she'd insisted, against her dad's advice, on saying some words, but her feet had stayed rooted to the floor, the chance missed.

To Edie's surprise, however, the stone-setting was different. All her dad did was greet people and thank them for coming, then after a short service they all trudged off along the winding cemetery paths. As promised, Lizzie didn't let go of Edie's hand. So many buried people, Edie thought: each so significant but also so insignificant.

Then they were there, at the so-called final resting

place: her mother's grave. Although the sun was out, Edie felt a chill come over her and pulled the sheepskin collar up around her neck. It was surprisingly comforting to have the special coat on again.

Quiet descended and the rabbi began with the prayers. Edie looked over at some of the black lettering beneath the Hebrew on the smooth, light-grey headstone:

ALEXANDRA LEILA FRANKLIN
A WONDERFUL MOTHER AND A CHERISHED WIFE –
WE MISS YOU DEARLY.

They'd argued at home for days about the wording. Edie had wanted something more direct, more honest: 'The best mum ever, we love you more than words can describe. P.S. Life isn't bloody fair.' But her dad had trumped her with something more 'appropriate'.

One by one, close family members then followed a Jewish ritual. A year ago at the funeral, each had taken the spade, spooned some gravel and earth onto its flat surface and deposited the material into the grave, a hollow clang sounding as each spade-load landed on the coffin. To mark the stone-setting, though, a personally chosen small stone was carefully placed onto the flat slab of granite at the base of the headstone. Edie had brought with her an oval, dark-grey piece of pumice that she'd found with her mum when walking on the beach in the Canaries. Edie felt hypnotised by the little rock, resting peacefully beneath the word 'Alexandra'.

'It's over, Edie,' said Mama suddenly.

'Can you stop squeezing my hand so tight,' pleaded Lizzie. Edie looked down to see her friend's hand turning blue. She loosened her grip but didn't let go.

'Let's head back,' said Dad.

Edie nodded, but then asked, 'Can I have a little time here by myself?'

'Of course, luv,' Dad replied. 'Don't be too long, though.'



Something caught the corner of Edie's eye. Initially, she thought it was a spade, left carelessly at a nearby graveside, but then another glint. Edie turned her gaze towards the edge of the cemetery, where the sun was bright and she had to shield her eyes. A cloud briefly gave respite, but when it passed, there it was again: the glimmer of a parked car.

At first, Edie thought little of it, but then noticed that the car was inside the cemetery perimeter, on a track around the edge. Next to the vehicle stood a man. He was about sixty metres away but, undoubtedly, was staring directly at Edie. One thing that Mum had taught her was the importance of observational skills: if something looked out of place, make a mental note of it. So Edie did: the man appeared to be in his forties with short hair, possibly balding. He was smartly dressed in an expensive looking dark coat and sunglasses. The car seemed flashy too: a Mercedes or maybe a Bentley. Black, darkened windows, suspicious looking. For a moment, their gaze seemed to meet. Then, quite suddenly, the man turned towards the car, banged twice on the roof with his gloved

hand, got in the back and the car drove off.

The car was tracking the circuit of the cemetery and seemed to be getting nearer. Unsettled, Edie quickened her step towards the others. Abruptly, tyres screeched as a left turn was made through the car park, and the car was onto the main road and away. Edie stopped for a second, breathless. She looked up and saw Lizzie waiting by the prayer hall near the main entrance. Lizzie hadn't noticed Edie yet.

The sun had gone in again and Edie felt the chill return. She pulled the sheepskin collar up further and shoved her hands into her coat pockets. The fingers of her right hand came into contact with some paper. Edie explored deeper inside the pocket, suspecting an old cinema ticket or party invitation. But this felt bigger. That was odd, Edie thought. She hadn't remembered putting anything in her pocket. Then again, Edie hadn't put her hands in there since they'd left the house. Maybe not even at the house.

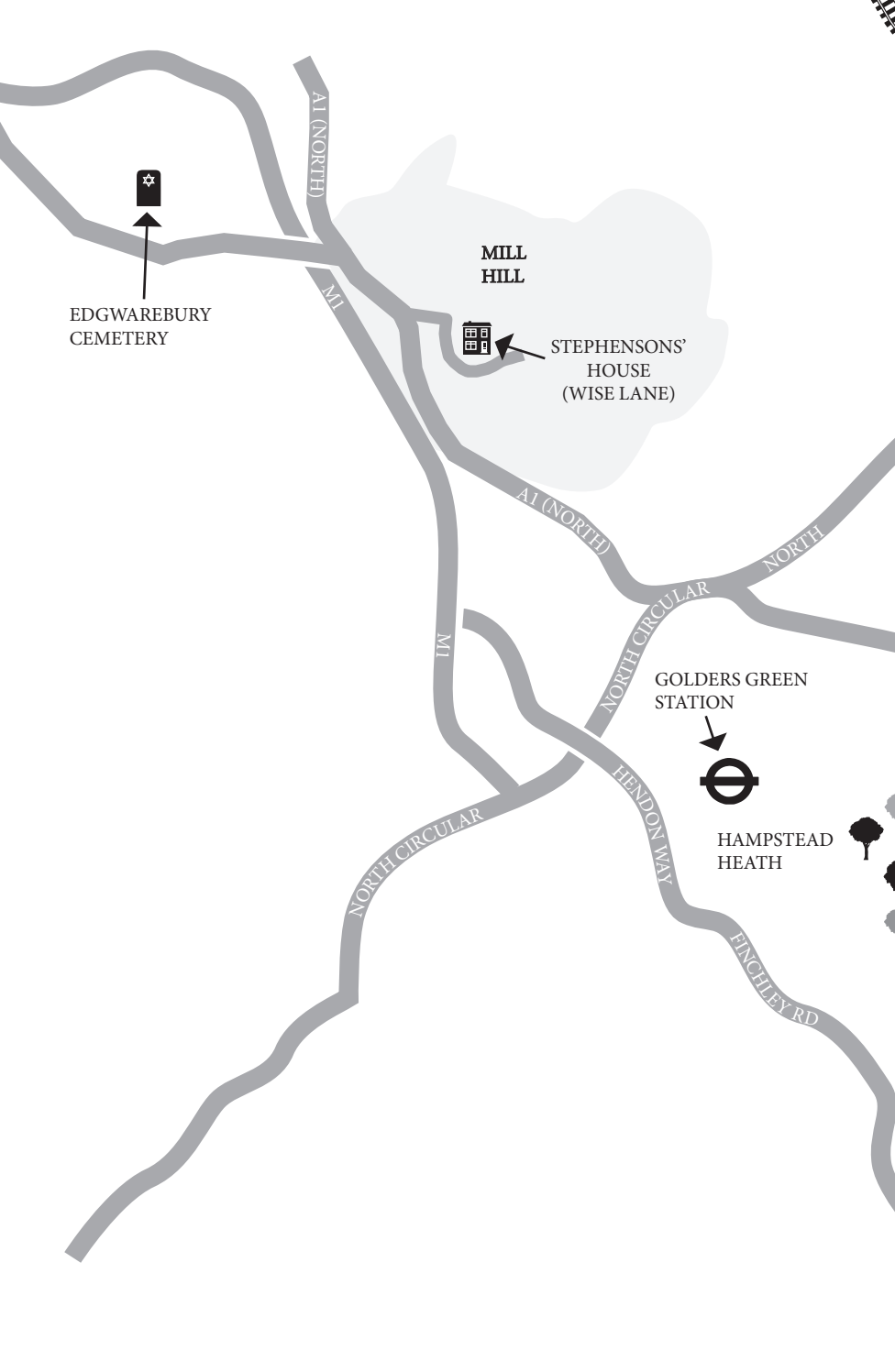
Carefully, Edie removed the object from her pocket and discovered an envelope. She stared at the front and her eyes opened wider. Just one word: 'Edie'. But it wasn't the word that was making her heart race, it was the handwriting. Unquestionably, it was her mum's.

Edie looked up. Lizzie still hadn't seen her. Fingers shaking, Edie tried to open the flap. It was sealed tight and her nervousness wasn't helping. Finally, she managed to pull out the paper from inside. Edie unfolded a single sheet and started reading.

My darling Edie,

If you are reading this now, it means something dreadful has happened to me. I might even be dead, most probably murdered ...

A heave from her stomach, a terrible heat. Edie turned her head to the side and violently threw up.


A1 (NORTH)
EDGWAREBURY
CEMETERY
M1
MILL
HILL
STEPHENSONS'
HOUSE
(WISE LANE)
A1 (NORTH)
NORTH
NORTH CIRCULAR
M1
GOLDERS GREEN
STATION
HENDON WAY
HAMPSTEAD
HEATH
NORTH CIRCULAR
FINCHLEY RD

Reaching into her coat pocket
beside her mother's grave,
Edie finds a note from Mum …

My darling Edie,

If you are reading this now, it means something dreadful has happened to me.

The note contains the first of five cryptic clues. By solving the clues, Edie will discover who wanted her mother killed – and why.

Courageous and clever, Edie risks everything in her investigation as she enters a dangerous adult world in which science and morality clash violently.

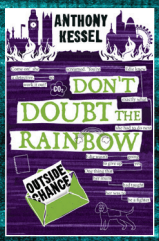
But it's only by changing her whole way of thinking – and staying one step ahead of the shadowy presence out to stop her – that she'll find a path through to the truth.

the psychological link between your thinking and your feelings or emotions

Not being alone in the world

that fresh thinking – new ideas or insights – almost never emerge from a busy mind.

Look out for:



www.crownhouse.co.uk
Suitable for ages 11+ £6.99
ISBN 978-1785835551-1
9 781785 835551

Cover design and illustration ninataradesign.com