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July 2018

Groggy with sleep, Rachel peered at the screen of her phone. A French number. The phone slipped from her hand on to the floor and she grabbed it up again, staring at the number with wide eyes, adrenaline charging through her even though it was barely seven in the morning.

Finally she pressed reply. 'Hello?'

'*Bonjour*, good morning. This is Detective Avril Loubet from the Police Municipale in Nice. Is this Mrs Rachel Rimmer?'

'Yes,' she replied. 'Speaking.'

'Mrs Rimmer. I am afraid I am calling you with some very distressing news. Please, tell me. Are you alone?'

'Yes. Yes, I am.'

'Is there anyone you can ask to be with you now?'