

'He had found some bones washed up. A full set of human bones. We believe, Philip, that they may belong to your sister, Bridget.'

'Birdie.' He says this in a whisper.

'Yes. Birdie. Of course. So if you don't mind, if you're OK, I wanted to run through some details with you. Just to confirm. Tell me, Philip, what happened the last time you saw Birdie? Can you recall?'

'Yes. Very clearly. She was sort of famous at the time.'

'I hear she was once in a pop band.'

'That's right. They had a big hit; it was number one for weeks. She was jetting off all over the place. It was . . . We're a musical family, but it wasn't quite the thing, you know, to be so . . . *visible*. We were all a bit taken aback by the whole thing. She and the band were doing a gig at the Corn Exchange so she spent the night with Mum and Dad rather than in a hotel with the band. I was, what, fourteen? Fifteen? I remember it clearly. There was a big row between Birdie and my mother. There was *always* a big row between Birdie and my mother. My mother doesn't really like girls, you see. She had six boys and two girls and never got on with either of them. After that Birdie didn't come home. Not once. I know my sister saw her from time to time – she would know more about that period of Birdie's life – but she passed away a long time ago.'

'Ah. Was this perhaps the sibling deathbed request that alerted your parents to Birdie's disappearance?'

'Yes. Jenny's death. We tried everything to track Birdie down, but nobody seemed to know anything. None of the band members. She'd had a boyfriend, Justin. No sign of him, and obviously this