

Prologue

Beneath the cold waters of the Channel lurked the hunter.

A malignant creation, stalking its victims and choosing its moment. Something unseen that could slice through a dinghy with barely a whisper, sending its occupants into the brine, leaving frigid chance alone to decide who survived.

Prayers and screams fell silent as the swell engulfed open mouths. Most disappeared without trace, while a handful clung to life with numbed fingers and salt-burned lungs, oblivious to the architect of their misfortune.

Nothing existed but whispers in the dark – rumours of sea monsters, red eyes in the water, or had the Channel itself grown teeth? Rumours suppressed by fear or by design, but rumours are like ghosts – they seep into the air like smoke in the dark, taking root where they land and expanding to fill the void.

Those responsible slept fitfully in warm beds, minds racked over decisions they could justify in daylight but not in darkness, telling themselves it was for the greater good. Lovers felt betrayed, and relationships stretched beyond breaking point in the name of duty and survival.

Survivors thought they knew what awaited them on the other side, but none could foretell the perilous twists and turns of the road ahead, or even know which of their companions to trust – were they saviours or something altogether more dangerous?

Those with foresight chose a different path, but could they escape the consequences? Criminal networks rise and fall, as do governments, but desperate measures only delay the inevitable, always at the cost of lives, careers and relationships.

*Never trust calm waters
But don't expect them either*