

THE MONKEYPUZZLE

by Jonathan Lush and Alex Cassun

American expat Charley unwittingly interrupts a blackmail hand-off in a Scottish bar, sparking a string of events that see her and her co-workers pursued the length of the country by criminals and conglomerates.

We open into a uncertain economic climate, in which everyone has an eye on their wallets. A clandestine PHOTOGRAPHER snaps away at *something* whilst a news report explains the economic situation.

SCOTLAND. Plucky CHARLEY PRICE arrives at her design studio workplace. The atmosphere is tense: MATT explains they're losing business; boss SID attempts damage control. After-work drinks are arranged; instead, Charley pawns a wedding ring before heading home for a quiet night in. However, Sid orchestrates a ruse to get her there. The Monkeypuzzle bar is lively; not the place for aged O'CONNOR, carrying a satchel of cash which BALLARD and SKALA lie in wait for. Charley discovers the cash, and takes it, forgetting her bank card at the bar.

Leaving in Sid's car, they are hotly pursued. Against Charley's wishes, Sid corners Ballard in an empty car park. As Sid mugs Ballard for kicks, O'Connor flees the scene, leaving Skala powerless to intervene. Sid steals Ballard's encrypted USB drive... He immobilises Ballard's car and they drive away, unaware of Skala's tail. Sid celebrates their "win" whilst Skala retrieves Ballard. They wait outside Sid's apartment. Meanwhile, O'Connor contacts his office, PR firm Franklin and Hodges, explaining the plan has gone awry.

THE SHARD, LONDON. CAITLIN HODGES considers O'Connor's news, and with the help of assistant JEROME, decides on a plan to eliminate the problem altogether... She contacts her former partner, PETER FRANKLIN for his underworld contacts, and hires EZRA MCEWAN to get the job done. Ezra explains to wife WENDY he has work, though she suspects an affair and copies Hodges' phone number. He picks up brother-in-law RONNIE to help.

Charley recruits Matt to decrypt the USB, in an effort to return the cash. She's back at the bar for her bank card but leaves empty handed – Skala has it, and has broken into her flat. Meanwhile Ballard contacts Hodges to demand more money. Charley runs to Sid's office, where he hides the cash, reassures her, and sends her off with Matt for the evening. The decryption takes time. The pair's romance ends with a whimper, rather than a bang. Sid elects to steal half of the cash.

Charley discovers that Ballard's USB is full of files incriminating entrepreneur ALAN PALMER moments before Skala attacks, injuring Matt. Charley leads them away. Soon after, Ezra tracks and kills Ballard, then Skala. A guilt-ridden message from Sid leads Ezra to him. Franklin's conversation with Hodges leaves him suspicious. He tries to forewarn Ezra, but Ezra is busy torturing Sid.

In hospital, Charley's attempts to reconcile with Matt fall flat as secrets of her past are revealed. Wendy's jealousy causes her to phone Hodges, spooking her. Ezra's hunt for Charley changes course when a conversation with Hodges makes him think twice. At the office, Charley cannot prevent Ezra taking the cash. In Sid's flat, Charley arrives too late, interrupting Ronnie's attempts at covering their tracks. They fight; Charley wins. She heads to the train station...

LONDON. Charley recognises Ezra and follows him to the Shard as the charity launch takes place. Hodges holds Ezra's wife and daughter captive to intimidate Ezra. Charley and Franklin arrive to intervene, and the despicable true nature of the charity is revealed. Finally siding with Charley, Ezra initiates a battle that leaves Hodges dead, the incriminating photos lost amongst a crowd, and Charley with the upper hand. She takes the money and escapes to a new life... However a charitable couple from the launch take the USB home with them, unaware of its contents.