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# CONDEMNED

The Watch - Book Four

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This book contains fantasy themes appropriate for mature readers only. Nothing in this book should be interpreted as Blushing Books' or the author's advocating any non-consensual sexual activity.

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## Prologue

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IN SCOTTISH CRIMINAL TRIALS, there are three verdicts available, guilty, not guilty, and not proven. The latter has been labeled by some as the bastard verdict. The legal implications of a not proven verdict are the same as a not guilty verdict, as the accused is acquitted and is innocent in the eyes of the law. When a not proven verdict is returned by a Scottish jury, it can often imply the jury thought the accused was guilty, but the prosecution did not present a strong enough case, leaving a stain against the accused.

He walked into the gray stone government building on Pitstruan Place, alone, having been summoned in a cryptic email. Aberdeen had three MSPs, Members of the Scottish Parliament, who represented the city, and this particular office belonged to Kevin Flynn. He had heard of the man and knew him to be a staunch member of the Conservative and Unionist Party. Flynn was known to play hard and not always fair. That's what worried him about the email and visit.

He nodded at the woman behind the reception desk as he entered. "I have an appointment with Mr. Flynn."

"He's expecting you, sir," she said, fluffing her short blonde curls with her hand and giving him a sugary smile. "You can go on back."

He walked down the short hallway and knocked on the door at the end before opening it. A large brass plate bore the name K. Flynn in bold script on the wall next to it.

"Good you made it," Flynn said, pointing to a chair in front of his desk. It was strewn with old tea mugs and files. "Please have a seat."

"Aye, well, your message made it sound urgent." He sat down, trying to take a measure of the man before him. Middle-aged, slightly overweight, short stature, he was most likely compensating for what he lacked in physical attributes with an abrasive demeanor.

"I'll cut straight to the point," Flynn said, avoiding his eye. "Some information has come to me about your relationship with the First Minister of Scotland."

A chill ran up his spine. The very accusation was alarming. The FMP was the client whose identity The Watch had worked hard to keep secret. What else did this bastard know?

"I'm not sure what you're talking about," he said slowly.

A flush rose in Flynn's neck and face, making him take on the appearance of someone with a bad sunburn. "Don't take me for a fool. I know about your secret meetings and, let's just say, your little affair," the MSP spat. "This is an election year. It could cost her."

"That sounds like slander," he said calmly. "Even if it were true, which it's not, I would say you are threatening me."

Flynn's mobile rang, and he answered it. "It's not a good time," he yelled into the device. "I'll call you back." There was a moment of silence before he looked up. His face, if possible, had gone a shade darker. "I'm sorry. I need to take this."

He stood up, glowering over at the weasel. "Well then, I'll give you a moment." He walked out of the office and went into the bathroom. Bloody hell, the stupid idiot was trying to blackmail him. He wasn't the first, and he wouldn't be the last. But the more concerning matter was where Flynn had come by this information. He pulled his phone out of his pocket and sent a quick text off to Gabriel. Then he rinsed his face at the sink as he thought of how he would proceed. When he headed back in to the office, he found Flynn slumped over his desk, a syringe sticking out of the side of his neck.

He ran to the man and lifted his head. Foam, mixed with blood, bubbled from his mouth, but it was too late—the MSP was dead.

"Help," he shouted as he let go of Flynn and backed up.

The receptionist ran into the office. "Dear God," she said. "What have you done?"

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## Foreword

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*In 1725, following the Jacobite rebellion of 1715, General George Wade was sanctioned by George I to form six watch companies to patrol the Highlands of Scotland. These companies were in charge of disarming the Highlanders, bringing justice to criminals, and hindering rebels. The force was known in Gaelic as Am Freiceàdan Dubh, the dark or black watch. Their motto: Nemo Me Impune Lacessit. No one provokes me with impunity.*

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## Chapter 1

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### ABERDEEN, *Scotland*

It was quiet in the office. The kind of quiet that made one's mind scream with thoughts and feelings which often times were best kept under wraps but that had the tendency to break free in the solitude of a moment. Skye Anderson walked around her father's office. It was empty. Everyone was either out at meetings or for lunch. She chose this time, hoping to be alone, not quite ready for an audience. Her hand brushed the scales of justice that sat on his desk. She remembered the first time she knew she wanted to study law. She was seven and she sat in her father's office playing with her dolls while he worked at his desk. He had been given the scales by his father on his graduation day from law school, and she had been using them to weigh her dolls to see which one was heavier.

"Careful, darling," he said, coming over to her. He picked her up, sitting down with her on his lap.

"I'm going to be a solicitor one day, just like you," she said.

"Little girls aren't solicitors," he chided. "They're princesses."

"I don't want to be a princess," she said, frowning.

"All little girls want to be princesses."

"Not me." She knew in that moment, she would study hard and prove him wrong. What she didn't know was how flawed she would find the justice system.

Her hand involuntarily brushed a rendition of the scales she had tattooed on her right shoulder and sighed at the inscription underneath them. *The truth hurts*. Now, more than ever, this rang true. She and her father were not on good terms when he passed away four months ago. He was of a different generation, old school, and she considered him part of the good old boys' club. He never seemed to understand her, and when one tattoo turned into too many for her count as they covered her body, he stopped talking to her altogether. Their relationship dissolved quickly, with him stating that he did not understand her lifestyle and found her expression of 'art' disturbing if not downright vile. But that was only one disagreement; the other was her view of the legal system. She was ready to confront the cracked and bruised edges in the justice system, opining that the paternalistic past was no longer workable and a call to action necessary. He, on the other hand, was stuck in that exact authoritative past, unable to budge. She was surprised when she found out he had left her his shares and partnership in his law firm, as he had not even attended her graduation ceremony from The University of Edinburgh, where she graduated with a first class master degree in criminal law.

"A moment of your time, lassie," a voice said from the door. She looked up, startled.

"Donald," she said, trying to compose herself. It was her father's partner. The two of them had founded the firm, Anderson Coulter-Court Solicitors, twenty-five years ago.



Skye had never called him by his first name before, always referring to him as Mr. Coulter, and she noticed the slight scowl cross his eyes at the familiarity and what he would consider a lack of respect. She didn't care. For all practical purposes, they were in fact partners now, whether he liked it or not. "Of course, Please sit down."

She sat in her father's chair with Donald opposite her across the desk.

"You'll be wanting to sell your father's shares, I presume, lass," Donald said, looking at his watch as if he had other things he needed to attend to.

*Arsehole.* He was just like all the rest, making assumptions without any evidence. This was her chance to break up the old boys' club she so detested and hopefully begin to crack the glass ceiling. "On the contrary," she said smugly. "I plan on taking over my father's partnership."

"I'm afraid we've already split up his clients," he said, fingering the collar of the white dress shirt he wore.

"You had no right to do that." She stood up, determined not to let him intimidate her. "The estate was in confirmation."

"Exactly, the estate was in confirmation and his clients needed representation. I had no other choice."

"Then you'll need to give them back," she said.

"They've already signed agreements," he countered. "I'm afraid I can't do that."

"This isn't right." She shook her head, hoping to control the anger that simmered just beneath her countenance.

"Whether it's right or wrong, lass, it's what I've done," he said, his voice rising. "Now I'm sure you could help Donnie and Tam with their clients, or you can sell me your shares."

"Go to hell, Donald," she yelled. "And tell your sons they can go to hell too. My degree is higher than both of theirs."

I'm a solicitor advocate, and I won't be their glorified secretary."

Donald stood, red in the face, and stormed from the room. She shut the door and went over to the file cabinets, opening them. They were all empty. The bastard was telling the truth. She wouldn't let him break her. She would start over with new clients, but she absolutely wouldn't let him break her. She sat back down at the desk, resting her head in her hands. Damn Donald Coulter and his sons Donnie and Tam. A phone rang. She pulled hers out of her purse, but there was no incoming call. It was coming from her father's desk. She opened the drawers, trying to locate the sound, and finally found it in the back of a bottom drawer.

She pushed the accept button. "Hello," she said.

A deep voice answered, "I'm sorry. I have the wrong number." The person hung up.

She stared at the phone. They had her father's personal phone back at the house. What was this phone for? She turned it over in her hands. It was locked with a passcode, so she couldn't get into it.

It rang again. She pressed accept. "Hello," she said then added quickly, "Robert Anderson's phone."

"Are you his secretary?" the same voice as before asked.

"I'm his daughter."

"I'm calling regarding Alexander MacKay. Can you have Bobby meet him at Aberdeen Police station off Nelson. He's been arrested." The person hung up.