

# I Found You

## PART ONE

### Chapter 2

Lily's stomach is clenched as hard as a rock. Her heart has been beating so fast for so long that she feels as though she might pass out. She stands and heads for the window as she's done every couple of minutes for the past twenty-three and a half hours. In thirty minutes she'll call the police again. That's how long they said she had to wait before she could report him as officially missing. But she'd known he was missing within an hour of him not coming home from work last night. She felt it like a slick of ice down her spine. They only got back from their honeymoon ten days before. He'd been racing back from work, sometimes early, and certainly never more than a minute late. He'd been coming home with gifts, with 'two-week anniversary' cards, with flowers. He'd spring through the door and say, 'God, baby, I missed you so much,' and then breathe her in, desperately. Until last night. He wasn't there at six. He wasn't there at half six. He wasn't there at seven. Each minute felt like an hour. His phone rang and rang for the first hour. And then, suddenly, it stopped ringing, no voicemail, just a flat high-pitched tone. Lily was filled with blind, raging impotence. The police . . . Well, Lily had not had an opinion either way about the British police before last night. Much in the same way as you wouldn't have an opinion about your local laundrette if you'd never had to use it. But she has an opinion now. A very strong one. In twenty minutes she can call them again. For what good it will do her. She knows what they think. They think: Stupid young girl, foreign accent, probably a mail-order bride (she is not a mail-order bride. She met her husband in a real-life situation, face-to-face). She knows the woman she spoke to thinks her husband is messing about behind her back. Having an affair. Something like that. She could hear it in the slackness of her tone of voice. 'Is it possible that he just got waylaid after work?' she'd said. 'In the pub?' She could tell that the woman was doing something else as she talked to her, flipping through a magazine maybe, or filing her nails. 'No!' she'd said. 'No! He doesn't go to the pub. He just comes home. To me.' Which had been the wrong thing to say, in retrospect. She'd imagined the sardonic lift of the policewoman's eyebrow. Lily doesn't know who else to call. She knows Carl has a mother, she's spoken to her on the phone, just once, on their wedding day, but she hasn't met her yet. Her name is Maria or Mary or Marie or something like that and she lives . . . well, God, Lily doesn't know where she lives. Something beginning with S, she thinks. To the west? Or maybe the east. Carl told her once; she can't remember and Carl keeps all his numbers stored in his phone. So what can she do? She also knows that Carl has a sister. Her name is Suzanne. Susan? She's much older than him and lives near the mother in the place beginning with S. They are estranged. He hasn't told her why. And he has a friend called Russ who calls every few days to talk about football and the weather and a drink they really should have one day soon but it's so hard to organise because he has a new baby. Lily is sure there are other people in Carl's life but she's only known him since February, only been married for three weeks and only lived with him here for ten days so she's still new to Carl's world. And new to this country. She knows no one here and nobody knows her. Luckily Lily's English is fluent so there's no

communication issue to deal with. But still, everything is so different here. And it's strange to be completely alone. Finally the time ticks over to 6.01 p.m. and Lily picks up her phone and calls the police. 'Hello,' she says to the man who answers the phone, 'my name is Mrs Lily Monroe. I'd like to report a missing person.'