

Inspector Adrian Mysteries – Book 3

The Cat is out of the Bag

Plot Summary - Chapter by Chapter Breakdown

Notes: We have left several details of this story vague, so you can give them a personal touch. You can tailor this outline in several of the following ways to make it unique, without changing the main plot. 1) Detective Inspector David Adrian may be involved romantically with Sergeant Sylvia Hunter. 2) The story may be set in any seaside town, village or community of your choice. 3) Constables Xavier and Durable may assume a larger role in the story. 4) Mr. Pumas may have been a child molester before he agreed to work with the Swedish firm. 5) Change the ending – Eliza died in Sweden following a SM session going wrong.

Part One - Rising Tension

Chapter One

CH 1/ Scene 1 – Detective Inspector David Adrian is settling nicely in the village of Gorey on the Isle of Jersey. Sergeant Sylvia Hunter assists him in the conduct of all eventual investigations. The two constables who work at the police station are always keen to impress their “Boss”. David is lodged at the *White House Inn*. The guests are mostly retired folks who prefer living at the *White House* to living at the local retirement home. David Adrian finds the people of Jersey friendly and attentive to their wellbeing. Most of them have taken up a sport or take long walks along the island’s shores regularly.

CH 1/ Scene 2 – The first doll Inspector Adrian sees is displayed in the window of a souvenir shop along the promenade. He notes the fact that the little doll seems out of place in a shop dedicated to the sale of seafarers’ replicas of old sextants, helms, sea trunks and a large variety of colorful shells. Around the next corner while he is shopping for a few items at the local drugstore, he notices another one of these dolls in the window. This one is sitting on a stack of bar soaps. Again, he pays no mind to the presence of a doll amid soaps and perfumes. However, when he walks back to the *White House* intending to put his purchases away in his room he notices a third doll amid the grocer’s display. He has to find out what this is all about.

CH 1/ Scene 3 – Inspector Adrian waits for the customers to leave the shop before he approaches Jim Gillard, the owner of the grocery store. When the inspector asks him what the doll in the window means, Jim replies that it’s a tradition. Every year on the first day of school, every shop in Gorey puts a doll at the shop window. Why? The little girl who owned these dolls went to school that morning and never arrived nor did she return home that day. That happened twenty years ago, and still her mom does not know what happened to her. Inspector Adrian asks why displaying the dolls in every shop. Jim tells him that it was the mother’s idea. Mrs. Ripley hoped that her daughter Eliza would see the dolls and come home.

CH 1/ Scene 4 – When he arrives at the Gorey precinct, Inspector Adrian is surprised to see another doll sitting on Constable Durable’s desk. When the constable is about to explain, Adrian tells him that it used to be one of Eliza Ripley’s dolls and since today is the first day of school, the tradition calls for everyone to display a doll in their shop window. However, Adrian wonders why Durable would have one of the dolls. The constable tells the inspector that Mrs. Ripley called on him as soon as she realized that her daughter was missing. They spent days at the precinct investigating Eliza’s disappearance with no result. That’s when Mrs. Ripley gave him a doll to put on his desk – reminding him that he still has not found her.

CH 1/ Scene 5 – Touched by the sentiment and the enduring tradition displayed by every shop owner, David Adrian decides to find out what happened to Eliza. There has to be a reason for an eight year old to disappear suddenly on the first day of school. His sergeant, Sylvia Hunter has logged in already and is online with the archival records in St. Helier. Within the hour, she receives the reports pertaining to Eliza’s disappearance. Since the case is twenty years’ old, the reports are short and not very detailed. At the time, the search & rescue for Eliza soon turned into a search for her body or remains.

Chapter Two

CH 2/ Scene 1 – There are only a few pages worthwhile reading. Constable Durable quickly fills in the gaps. Eliza left her home at eight-thirty on September 2nd that year. She was seen going down the street toward the school and turning the corner in the direction of the beach. Why did she turn in the direction of the beach? Durable says that she had a friend who lived in that street and she used to pick her up, so that the two girls made their way to school together. Has the friend been interviewed at the time? Yes. Suzanne is her name. She still lives in the same house. At the time, Suzanne waited for Eliza until she was afraid to be late, and made her way to school alone.

CH 2/ Scene 2 – So, Eliza disappeared between the moment she turned the corner and did not reach Suzanne's house, two blocks away. Any other witnesses? No one has seen anything, no. It's as if Eliza vanished into thin air. And the dolls are meant to attract her attention if she happens to see them and recalls the events or wants to come home, is that it? Durable nods. In twenty years a lot has happened in the town but Mrs. Ripley still maintains her daughter is alive and well. Nobody wants to tell her otherwise. By respect for her and her daughter's memory, everyone displays the dolls without fail on the first day of school.

CH 2/ Scene 3 – After reading the skimpy reports and the few witnesses accounts, Adrian decides to pay Mrs. Ripley a visit. He takes Sylvia Hunter with him. She is more sensitive when it comes to dealing with children's cases. Mrs. Ripley is happy to meet the new Detective Inspector and invites him and Sergeant Hunter to take a seat in her living room. Every wall has at least a dozen framed photographs of the little girl – from a baby in a swaddling blanket to the girl of eight showing off her new school uniform. Adrian is quick to compliment the bereaved mother in her memorial display and asks if the uniform is what Eliza wore when she disappeared. “Yes, that's the way my Liza looked the last time I saw her.”

CH 2/ Scene 4 – Once again, Mrs. Ripley explains that Eliza was happy to go to school. She liked school. She had a few friends – mostly girls of her age – and she only had two teachers. Her homeroom teacher was a lady by the name of Mrs. Marsha and her science and math teacher was Mr. Pumas. She liked them both but preferred Mrs. Marsh. Mr. Pumas gave her a lot of homework for a girl of her age. “Kids didn't have computers and Liza had to stay behind on some evenings to find answers for her projects at the school library.” Inspector Adrian asks if that happened often. Mrs. Ripley says that it happened too often to her liking, especially at her age.

CH 2/ Scene 5 – When the inspector and his sergeant are about to leave, Mrs. Ripley says that Eliza kept a journal. It's not a very detailed one but if they care to have it to help in the new investigation, she'll give it to them. Adrian does not want to ask why Mrs. Ripley did not show it to Constable Durable at the time, but Sergeant Hunter, to his surprise, does. Mrs. Ripley tells them the journal contains practically nothing of interest and at the time she did not think it would help.

Chapter Three

CH 3/ Scene 1 – As soon as they return to the precinct, the inspector starts reading the journal. Mrs. Ripley was right; there's practically nothing of interest reading through the first pages, but, when he comes to the pages written during the summer before her disappearance, Eliza refers to the “cat” watching her. She also says that “the cat is out of the bag” – does that mean Eliza had a secret to keep with this “cat”? He asks Hunter what she thinks. The sergeant tells him that usually little girls have stuffed animals who are “watching over them” when they sleep. As for being “out of the bag”, maybe Eliza heard the expression from some of her friends. Or, perhaps, the inspector is right; Eliza had a secret that was revealed.

CH 3/ Scene 2 – Adrian returns to Mrs. Ripley's home. He asks her if Eliza had a real cat or a stuffed cat. Mrs. Ripley is quick to say that Eliza did not like cats. Apparently she heard something about cats being devious or being evil and she didn't want to have anything to do with them. When Inspector Adrian shows her the sentence in the diary about “the cat is out of the bag”, Mrs. Ripley recalls that Eliza mentioned a “dirty old cat” roaming the school ground. She says that she mentioned it to Constable Durable at the time, but no one at school knew what Eliza referred to.

CH 3/ Scene 3 – Inspector Adrian knows there’s something in that sentence. Eliza did not like cats; she wrote about it in her journal; she mentioned a “dirty old cat roaming the school ground” and she says it’s “out of the bag”. He can’t help but think that the “cat” is someone Eliza knew and disliked very much indeed. Sergeant Hunter agrees. Moreover, she points out to Adrian that her math teacher was a guy named “Pumas” – would she have compared him to a “puma” or a “cat”. Would she know pumas are cats? Presumably so. Mrs. Ripley mentioned that Eliza had a lot of homework that required for her to visit the school library often. Maybe she found out what pumas were while reading some books about cats.

CH 3/ Scene 4 – The next step is therefore to interview Mr. Andrew Pumas – if he still lives on the island – and to have a look at what he is doing these days. Is he still a teacher; if so, where? Or is he retired...? After that Adrian plans to go and visit Eliza’s friend, the girl who waited for Eliza until she feared to be late going to school. Unfortunately, they would not be able to interview Eliza’s homeroom teacher – she passed away some years ago.

Part Two - Main Action

Chapter Four

CH 4/ Scene 1 – Inspector Adrian and Sergeant Hunter find out that Andrew Pumas still lives in Gorey. He is now a blog writer for several outfits in England – most of them in London. He has lived in the same house for years. He welcomes the two police detectives quite warmly. He invites them to have coffee with him and shows them what sort of blog he writes. He says it’s much easier than teaching and, in fact, it pays better if you know what you’re doing. When Adrian begins asking questions about Eliza, he gets fidgety. He says that he never had such a troubling experience before. For days, he, himself, searched for the girl. He is quite familiar with the island and spent almost every weekend until Christmas hiking the woods to find some sign – anything – of her.

CH 4/ Scene 2 – While the old teacher is describing what he did to find Eliza; Adrian examines the pictures of children adorning the walls of his den-cum-office near the living room. He notices two photographs in particular. One is a group photo of the class. Andrew Pumas has an arm around Eliza’s shoulders on the first row of the picture. The second is a photo taken after a ball game. Mr. Pumas is bending down to have both Eliza’s and his face close to one another. Adrian is no longer surprised that Eliza did not like her math teacher. And her dislike of him had nothing to do with science or math.

CH 4/ Scene 3 – As soon as they return to the precinct, Adrian phones his Superintendent in St. Helier. He wants to confirm what would constitute *legal cause* for him to obtain a warrant allowing him to search the teacher’s house. The Super tells him that if he saw something that would indicate misconduct on the part of Mr. Pumas, a magistrate would be inclined to issue the warrant. Adrian mentions the two photographs. The Super is not convinced that it would be enough. He then asks Adrian to have Sergeant Hunter dig a little deeper in Mr. Pumas’ internet activities. Perhaps the gentleman is involved in something else than writing blogs for small enterprises in London.

CH 4/ Scene 4 – Hunter goes to work straight away. Constable Xavier for his part is going to have a chat with Suzanne – Eliza’s friend. Adrian prefers for Xavier to interview that witness. They’re both of the same age and maybe Suzanne will confide in Xavier better than she would in the inspector. When Xavier reaches her house, Suzanne is in the garden raking the first autumn leaves from the lawn. She recognizes him right away. “Don’t tell me, they let you out?” she exclaims. Xavier is very happy that she recognized him. Suzanne Carpenter and Vernon Xavier were once an item – a long time ago now. Suzanne invites the constable indoors and offers him to have tea and scones with her.

CH 4/ Scene 5 – They chat for a while about their lives – she was married for a while and he moved back to Jersey after some five years in London – and then came back to the subject of Eliza’s disappearance. Suzanne recalls the morning it all happened as if it was yesterday. When Xavier asks her about Mr. Pumas, Suzanne shivers. She tells him the man had his paws all over the kids. She never liked him and still crosses the street when ever she sees him in town. Xavier then asks if she ever saw Eliza with him alone. No, Suzanne never did, but Eliza seemed intent in staying in school to do her homework at the library.

Chapter 5

CH 5/ Scene 1 – When Xavier comes back to the precinct; on the one hand he is happy to have had the chance to talk to Suzanne, but on the other, he now realizes how scared these girls must have been of their teacher. Adrian asks him if he thinks Mr. Pumas could be a child molester. He replies that based on Suzanne's reaction, yes, definitely. But that's not all he noted during his conversation with Suzanne; she mentioned Eliza staying behind at the school library quite often.

CH 5/ Scene 2 – Adrian cannot help but agree with Xavier. Mrs. Ripley and Suzanne Carpenter both noticed Eliza's staying behind at school on many occasions. It is something worth investigating further. Talking about the school library, Adrian wants to visit the old establishment with Constable Durable. Adrian is convinced something must have happened (more than once maybe) in the library. When the two of them arrive on site, they notice the addition that has been constructed behind the main building. This building did not exist when Eliza was in school here.

CH 5/ Scene 3 – The school principal, Mr. Grant, meets the two policemen at the entrance and immediately takes them to the library. He explains that as soon as the classes will be out, this place will swarm with kids. Such as any school library these days, it not only contains numerous books of all kinds, but tables upon tables with either desktop computers or laptops where students can access the internet. Of course, these computers did not exist at the time Eliza was in school. Mr. Grant shows them the various reading alcoves and the places where most students would do their homework if it required some library research.

CH 5/ Scene 4 – Adrian is quite satisfied to have seen everything he wanted to see in the school. Eliza's classroom faced the recess courtyard and did not offer any additional clue as to what may have happened to the girl before she disappeared. Next stop: the woods populating the hills above the town. These had been combed day and night in the first week following the young girl's disappearance. The dogs had gone through every possible hiding place for five miles above the edge of town. No one found anything relevant. As Durable and Adrian walk up the trail leading to the hillcrest, Durable asks Adrian if he thinks that Eliza has been abducted by tourists perhaps.

CH 5/ Scene 5 – Adrian does not think so. September is not a tourist season. Most people have returned home and work by then. On the other hand, someone may have abducted the girl on the first day of school, hoping nobody would look at the tourists returning to France or to Dover. It's worth looking into. However, Adrian is quite sure Eliza has not left the island. Another question that perhaps Durable can answer has to do with Mr. Pumas' movements on the day of Eliza's disappearance. Was he in school for the first period? Yes, he was. Suzanne noticed him particularly because he appeared "hot and bothered" when he was usually dressed to a "T" – not a hair out of place.

CH 5/ Scene 6 – Adrian is satisfied when he returns to the precinct. He believes he has solved the mystery of Eliza's disappearance. He finds Sylvia Hunter very excited to tell him that Mr. Pumas is not only blogging for London enterprises, but has an adult games website hosted by a Swedish company that sells sadomasochist items to their visitors. This might be enough to get Adrian a warrant to search Mr. Pumas' house. Although having a website dedicated to adult games is quite legal and above board, it indicates the man's sexual inclination.

Part Three - Resolution

Chapter Six

CH 6/ Scene 1 – Armed of a warrant, Durable and Xavier as well as Sergeant Hunter and Inspector Adrian search the old teacher's house in the hope of finding some indication that Eliza has been there or has been kept somewhere in the residence. What Adrian would be reluctant to find are the girl's remains. He would hate to tell her mother that the "cat" killed her child. After several hours of detailed search, Adrian has to conclude there are no remains or indication that Eliza was ever here.

CH 6/ Scene 2 – The next place to be searched is the school library, especially where it abuts the new addition at the back of the old building. In this instance Adrian calls on the school registrar to pull out the school building plans and the new addition's blue prints. Upon examination of the abutting walls, there is nothing that would indicate the presence of a cavity where a body would have been hidden at the time of the addition's construction.

CH 6/ Scene 3 – Adrian has to admit defeat. He truly thought the "cat" had abducted Eliza and had either killed her and buried her in his basement or in the library. He doesn't know where else Eliza could be now. However, Sergeant Hunter is not giving up. She has searched all of the websites Mr. Pumas has either worked with or has owned since he subscribed to the internet, and has found what she thinks is the answer to the riddle. There is one image of a small girl completely naked posing on a library table with the caption "The cat is out of the bag". Although heavily made up, the face is the one of Eliza. She has been posing for porn picture for the Swedish company since the day she disappeared.

CH 6/ Scene 4 – Adrian pulls all stops. He calls the Super in St. Helier and makes a verbal report of Sergeant Hunter's findings after he admits to finding nothing at Pumas' house or at the school library. The Super tells him that Mr. Pumas must have been well paid to engage the services of a school girl. He tells him to requisition his bank statements and to contact the Swedish police. They need to be careful, but Adrian now believes Eliza is probably a well paid dominatrix (or some such thing) working for the Swedes.

CH 6/ Scene 5 – Adrian was right. The Swedish police have been surveying this company's activity for some time now. Such as Mr. Pumas did twenty years ago, "facilitators" abduct children and send them to organizations similar to the one in Sweden. The girls often turn out to prostitution when their youth has abandoned them. In other instances, such as in Eliza's case, they continue to be trained in the "art" of adult games and SM practices.

CH 6/ Scene 6 – When Adrian returns from Sweden together with Eliza – now twenty-eight and elegance personified – her mother is waiting at the airport in St. Helier. Eliza hesitates at first and then, as if all childhood memories came flooding back, she rushes her mom and practically crushes her in a warm embrace.

CH 6/ Scene 7 – After he came back, Inspector Adrian walks down the street toward the grocer and notices the doll in the window – this time it holds a sign: "Welcome back, Eliza."

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