

When the Fat Lady Sings

a Lance Fisher Thriller

by PJ Lyon

Chapter One.

The problem with that old saying about the 'Fat lady singing' was that it didn't fit. It didn't fit Omera Fontaine. Not when she was alive. And not now she was dead.

Lance Fisher stepped up to the yellow line of police tape and stopped.

Fontaine was sprawled out on the Sydney Opera House steps like some strange avant-garde painting. Her legs were twisted. What was left of her face would have made Picasso look twice. She was thin. Reed thin. And dead. Oh so very dead.

Fisher turned away, fighting the bile that rose in his stomach. Wanting to shout and cry all at the same time.

What kind of sicko wanted to kill someone like Omera? She was a delicate wisp of a thing. A surprise of a woman considering the deep voice that came from within that slender frame.

Now that voice would never be heard again.

Sickness was soon replaced by anger. Fisher's gut turned to a solid, hard ball. His jaw clenched.

He would get the bastards who'd done this to poor Omera. He would get them no matter what. Returning to England was the last thing on his mind now. Sod the loss of money. Sod it all.

"Sir? Please move away from the tape."

The voice belonged to a woman. A tall woman in a three-piece grey suit. An Aussie police detective, or so the badge hanging on her hip said.

"You in charge here?" Fisher asked.

The detective gave him a disapproving look.

"Please, sir, we have to clear the area to do our job properly."

"And I asked you a question; are you in charge here?"

The tone of Fisher's voice had changed in an instant. This was the voice he used when he negotiated with some South-American kidnapper or the particularly dense CEO of a company. It said "I mean business."

"Who are you?" the detective asked.

Fisher glanced over his shoulder to the corpse. He winced then sucked in a quick breath.

"A friend...least I was until she was killed. I'll ask one last time; are you in charge here, because I want to speak to someone in charge and sharpish."

"I'm in charge," the detective said, "for the moment. My name is

Addison, Detective Betty Addison. And your name is?"

She offered a hand.

Fisher ignored it.

"But you might not be soon, is that what you're saying? Someone else could take the lead on this?"

"I don't know, sir. I can't tell the future. If you have any questions you can ask me."

"How?" Fisher said.

"How?"

Fisher turned to the tape and nodded in the direction of Omera's body.

"How was she killed, exactly?"

"I can't tell you—"

"You can and you will."

She smiled with disbelief. Her hand travelled slowly to the edge of her jacket and pulled it aside. An efficient looking Glock 7 was holstered on her hip.

"Are you threatening me, sir?"

Fisher had his own smile, and he didn't need a gun to back it up.

He reached inside the pocket of his leather jacket and whipped out one of his business cards.

"Here, take this," he said, "you call up your big boss, the Chief Constable or what have you, and you mention my name. Then we'll see if you're any more talkative."

Detective Betty Addison turned the card over in her hand.

"Am I supposed to be impressed with this?"

"You can be whatever you like, but you make the call to your boss and we'll see what happens."

She snorted derisively through her nose as she looked at the card.

"Lance Fisher, Private Security Consultant?" she read.

"That's me," Fisher said.

"And you're in Sydney, why?"

Six hours ago he'd still been in the penguin suit, still a little buzzy from champagne. He hadn't come to Sydney for business, only pleasure.

Now there was no pleasure to be had with Omera dead.

"Make the call, will you. You ask your bosses about me and we'll go from there. I'm not going to waste my whole morning playing ping-pong with you while you make up your mind."

She looked at the card, her face a mask of distrust.

"What I'm wondering, Mr. Fisher, is why you're standing around here asking all these questions when the victim was supposed to be a friend of yours. She was a friend of yours, right? Isn't that what you told me?"

Confused, Fisher shook his head.

“What kind of foolish question is that to ask?”

“You don’t seem very upset, Mr. Fisher, that’s why I’m asking.”

An angry snarl turned Fisher’s lip up at the corner.

“Oh, I’m upset, you better believe I’m upset.” Fisher stepped forward, his hands clenching reflexively. “I’m getting more upset by the moment, Miss.” He made the *Miss* sound like the hissing of snake.

Whatever the detective had come up against before, she was made of stronger stuff than many who’d faced Fisher in the past.

She met his pace, stepping forward to meet him. There wasn’t a hint of fear anywhere near her.

“How about I don’t make a call, Mr. Fisher? And how about you turn around and place your hands behind your back immediately. And I wouldn’t resist, for you own sake.”

Fisher laughed.

“Are you kidding—“

Detective Betty Addison placed one hand over the Glock pistol, the other hovered near a pair of matte-black cuffs on her belt. She was solid, determined, made of rock.

“Please, turn around, sir.”

“Are you arresting me, is that what this is?” Fisher’s voice rose with disbelief.

"Please, I'm going to ask you one last time, sir. Turn around and put your hands behind your back. If you resist me I'm authorised to use whatever force I deem necessary."

Fisher looked into the detective's eyes and saw there a steely determination. She wasn't toying with him. She was serious about all this.

She wasn't the only one.

Four uniformed officers had left their cars behind and were approaching to aid their fellow copper. They all had guns.

In Britain this would have all been much easier, Fisher knew. Guns were only brought out when they were deemed absolutely necessary. Against a steel truncheon and CS gas he knew he had a chance, but five guns against one unarmed man weren't the kind of odds Fisher liked to play.

Still...

He couldn't spend any time in a jail, not even a nice Sydney jail while he waited for someone with a little clout to help him out of the mess. He couldn't waste any time on this.

Omera was dead and he knew all about what would happen next.

Twenty-four hours was all you ever had after a killing. Twenty-four hours to find out who did it and why. Fisher wasn't about to waste any of those precious hours in the company of the New South Wales police force.

Fisher held up his hands, he put on his most charming smile.

"Okay, okay, I'll leave, if that's what you want, I'll just walk away and

you can—“

“What I want you to do is turn around and put your hands behind your back, sir.”

Fisher couldn't believe it, the detective was going ahead with her crazy plan of arresting him. She wasn't going to back down, even with his charming smile in full effect.

“Can't we just—“ he said.

There wasn't any arguing.

The four other officers had arrived. They were all itching around their holstered weapons as was the detective.

“Put your hands behind your back, sir,” Detective Betty Addison said. “If you do not comply immediately I will be forced to have these other officers restrain you physically.”

A smile grew on Fisher's lips, he lowered his hands.

Five against one.

But they wouldn't be armed, Fisher could see that now. They would use force, but not deadly force. He could see it in their eyes. They wanted to take him down physically, with their hands and whatever other non-lethal weapons they had.

Now the odds were a little better.

Fisher clenched his fists.

He smiled, that smile that wasn't one of joy but of knowing what would come next.

“Do what you have to,” he said, stepping forward to meet them,
“and I’ll do what I have to.”