

**FALLEN GODS**  
**BY**  
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***Background***

*Fallen Gods is the start of a collection of stories, the ideas of which have been forming in my mind since I was a child. I hope to create an entire universe of stories and characters, each intertwined with each other. I hope you will enjoy this novel as much as I enjoyed writing it.*

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***Notice***

*Contains foul language and limited non-graphical adult content.*

## Prologue

The train screeched to a halt in front of him. The platform was dark and damp, the remnants of a quick shower just moments before, leaving behind a dank mist in the air. The man stared up and down the platform, waiting for someone to get off, but instead, nothing happened at all. No-one got out, not even a guard. Rubbing the stubble on his face, the man turned around and began to walk back through the passageway in the little Welsh train station, heading back to the new 1984 silver Vauxhall Cavalier car parked up in the small car park. He picked up the car phone, stretching out the cord, and dialled a number.

“Hello?” A hoarse, well-educated English voice answered.

“Yes sir, Hendley here.” The man spoke with a crisp, upper-class British accent. “No-one showed up. You did say the ten-thirty from Newport?”

“Yes, I did indeed. No-one showed up at all?” A frustrated male voice asked.

“No, no-one, sir.” Hendley frowned as he listened into the receiver.

“Then she has to be on the next train. Wait there until somebody shows up.”

“Look, maybe if you just gave me...”

“All will become clear once we have the asset in our hands. Until then, stand-by; she is a need to know item. Trust me, the less you know for now, the better.”

He sighed. “Yes sir, very good. I’ll wait here.”

“Good luck, Hendley.”

“Thank you sir, good night.”

Hendley replaced the receiver and sighed, looking into the dark night, watching specks of mist blow across the car park, just as spots of rain began to fall once more, like heavy thuds of water impacting the windshield. “Blast.” He mumbled, reaching over to the back seat to retrieve a thermos of hot milky tea. He poured himself a cup, replacing the lid. Then, holding the plastic cup with both hands to keep warm, he took a sip. He was still not totally sure why he was there or what he was looking for; he was simply given orders to meet someone and pick up a package.

In a Burberry rain-coat and cap, Hendley looked like the typical image of a British spy. Not James Bond style, more Smiley from the Le Carre novels. After thirty years of loyal service, he was at his prime, leading the investigation into Soviet infiltrations, finding success shutting down some Russian recruitment groups in the universities, and even investigating the Cambridge Five in the early sixties; a dark moment in intelligence history when five MI6 agents were caught sending secrets to Soviet Russia. He could easily have been mistaken for a civil servant, and in some ways, that was all he was. Hendley’s job was either spent at a desk reading through reports, or sitting behind walls, listening to bugs placed through them. No, this was no James Bond at all, especially not with all that podge forming around his belly. He had never fired his service revolver in anger, and honestly spent more time commuting between the office in London, and his home in Bristol, than actually in the field.

Just six years previously, he had proposed to his neighbour and lover of three years, Carol. The beautiful lady had simply appeared from one day to the next; a moving van had arrived, and there she was; it was instant attraction, seemingly from both sides. Hendley had been returning from work, briefcase in hand, when he saw her. A few words of small talk and an invite for tea, kicked off a lovely relationship.

As the Cold War progressed, so had Hendley’s time away from Carol, but she had always been supportive, and he felt he could tell her anything, sometimes breaking protocol. Lately though, he was looking forward to retirement and travelling the world with his younger wife.

It was only when he was on his second sip of tea and was staring at the rumbling diesel train still parked up in the small station, with its dark windows, that a thought flashed through his mind. Downing the tea quickly, Hendley stepped out of the car. He reached inside his Macintosh, pulling out his Browning service revolver.

Approaching the train, Hendley once again checked the platform, which had remained empty. Cautiously, he walked to the front of the small four-carriage train and checked the driver's cabin. Opening the door carefully, he found the driver slumped forward over the controls, missing the top-half his head. The front windshield was covered in blood; a spray, as if he had been shot from behind, which was next to impossible given the space in the cab. Someone would have had to have been sitting next to him, holding a gun to the back of his head.

Hendley's stomach lurched as he viewed the sight in front of him, yet he held tight and swallowed the vomit which had entered his mouth. In all his years of service, he had never seen such a thing. In fact, he had only twice seen a dead body, both strangulations, and certainly never as gruesome as this.

Hendley looked over at the passenger seat. A half-eaten sandwich, papers, and an opened and part drunk glass bottle of Corona Cream Soda blocked anyone from sitting comfortably, and that was without considering the larger control console in the middle. There was no way anyone could get into a position to put a gun to the back someone's head.

*Could they have knocked the driver out and then shot him?* Hendley asked himself. He analysed the blood spray and the brain residue lining the screen. It had quite obviously come from the seated position. There was simply no way that the driver was slumped at the time, and yet, how was a gun aimed in such a way? The assailant's wrist would be twisted at an awful angle.

Looking back at what was left of the driver's face, Hendley tried to understand what frame of mind the driver was in, but from the look of things, the driver did not seem shocked or in pain. His face was neutral, bored even, as if his death was instantaneous, that he did not know he was about to be killed. How was this possible?

He scanned the cabin for anything, a fingerprint, anything suspicious, but found nothing. He traced his view down to the side of the seat to see if the driver was holding anything, but again, came up empty, short of a service torch mounted to the wall near the door to the cabin. Hendley detached it and switched it on, aiming it down the platform, holding it close to his revolver, searching; searching for anything, a shadow, movement, anything to suggest he was not alone. Finding nothing, he walked forwards cautiously, fully alert for any eventuality.

Reaching the first door to the train, he opened it and stepped inside carefully. Immediately, a foul stench of faeces engulfed his nostrils and once more his stomach heaved and his right hand bolted to his nose. Shining the torch into the carriage, he saw the bodies, commuters, male and female, slumped in their seats copies of *The Times* or *The Sun* newspapers spattered with blood, lying in laps or half-fallen on the floor.

Some passengers had fallen into the aisles, laying on the floor; blood pooled around them. Towards the back of the carriage, the faces appeared neutral, as if they were completely unsuspecting of anything, but near the front, where Hendley stood, the faces were of horror and panic; so the assailant had clearly entered the carriage from the one behind.

Once more, his stomach lurched into his throat. He was staring at a mass-murder.

He sniffed the air once more. There was more than faeces in that smell; char and ozone. Analysing the scene more closely, the carriage looked like your standard run of the mill British Rail train with simple metal framed bench seats. However, upon closer inspection, there were

scorch marks on the metal rails and fabric, as if a straight line of fire came from somewhere. Further back, he found the remnants of smouldering burned newspapers and clothes.

“I’m out of my depth.” He said to himself. He tried to work out when all this happened, how far into their journey, before a sudden realisation came to him. “Who stopped the train?”

Hendley’s caution increased, realising he was most likely not alone. He stepped cautiously back to the front of carriage, walking down from the train and gripping his revolver tightly, listening for any sound, and urging his nerves to calm. Walking quickly but staying alert, he made his way back to the car and dropped inside before slamming and locking the door quickly.

He was about to reach for the phone, when another thought occurred to him. He turned around and aimed the gun at the back seat, fully aware that the killer could be there waiting for him.

It was empty.

He picked up the phone and dialled the number again. “Hendley here. Sir, the train is still here.”

The person on the other end was silent for a moment, and then asked, “What do you mean *still there*? Surely it should’ve moved on by now?”

“I think, um, well, everyone is dead sir. It’s quite gruesome.” He waited once more for the response.

“Oh dear god. Hendley, now listen very carefully. I’m going to arrange for a clean-up team to get there. In the meantime, I think it would be wise of you to go, as far as possible, to safety.”

Hendley then breathed a sigh of relief. “Yes sir, I think that would be a *very* wise idea. Thank you sir.”

Hendley put the phone back in its cradle, started the car, and drove as fast as he could away from the station, powering down thin country roads until he felt he was safe. Only when he knew that he was far away from the murder scene did Hendley pull over, open the door, and vomit hard on the mud of the layby. Sitting back in the car seat, he placed the palms of his hands on the steering wheel and stared at his trembling fingers. He had never seen anything so horrific in all his life.

\* \* \* \* \*

“And we’re getting reports of a train crash in Wales, not far from Abertafol railway station.” The BBC presenter announced. “We will try to bring you more details about this accident, as soon as we know them.”

Hendley sat in his chair staring at the screen, holding his mug in his hands, trying to hold off the shakes he had felt since he had returned. At breakfast that morning, he had hardly been able to touch his bacon sandwich; he told his wife that it was some bug which was going round. “Are you sure you are all right dear? You look like you’ve seen a ghost. Shouldn’t you go lie down?” The silver haired lady asked as she stepped into the room and settled down next to her husband.

“Oh, just the bug dear. I’m sure I’ll be better later.” Hendley assured her. “Looks like there’s been an accident. Train crash.”

Mrs. Hendley raised a hand to her chest. “Oh my lord, I hope no-one was hurt. Dear oh dear, British Rail is really going down the drain, isn’t it?”

“Indeed Carol, indeed.” Just then, the phone rang. “I’ll get it. Suppose it’ll be work again.”

“On a Sunday of all days.” Carol tutted.

Ignoring his wife, Hendley picked up the phone. “Hendley residence.” He announced.

“Hendley dear boy, good work last night. It seems we lost our asset, so we’re going to revert to some alternative intelligence we have. A little less trustworthy I’m afraid, but it is something, at least. What do you know about the Isle of Man?” The voice asked.

Hendley made a slightly baffled expression. "Tax haven for some, motorbike races, and cats with no tails."

"Quite. How'd you and the lovely wife fancy a busman's holiday there? Two weeks, all expenses paid."

"Sounds lovely."

"Good. We'll make sure you have all the reports for you to read up on before you go. On a side note, whilst you are there, find out anything you can on three chaps of interest to us; Fred Vickers, Donovan Casey, and James Curren. Curren just bought a house there. His name crops up quite a bit. Vickers and Casey have also been doing quite a bit of snooping over there. I'd like to know why."

"Who are they?"

"Entrepreneurs of some type. Got their fingers in all sorts, but keep themselves quiet whilst they do it. They have been asking quite a few questions, which on their own seem harmless but I have my concerns."

"Yes sir. It would honestly help if I knew *what* I was looking for, sir."

"Yes, indeed it would. Unfortunately, we don't really have the foggiest, other than we know it slaughtered a train full of people within seconds, and is responsible for the disappearance of over three thousand men and women over the past five years."

Hendley chewed on his bottom lip before speaking. "Sir, what about the lead from up north? Lincolnshire, the missing couple." Hendley had received an anonymous tip to go check out the disappearance of a couple in Lincolnshire. The tip noted that the couple had had dealings with a person of interest they had been looking at in the past. He had handed it over to his superiors, believing it to be something worth investigating.

"I don't think they're connected. We had a team go scout that area and they came back empty handed. No, the Isle of Man is where I need you Hendley. The tickets will be in the usual place. Clear?"

"Perfectly sir."

"There's a good chap. Safe travels." The phone went dead.

Hendley replaced the receiver and thought for a moment. None of this felt right to him. If this was some form of Soviet infiltration, then why not say as much. This was something different, and he realised he was out of his depth. If whoever did this was on the Isle of Man, then he had a distinct feeling that he would not be coming back alive.

"Carol dear?" He mumbled.

"Yes dear?" She replied, merrily, as she knit away at a jumper.

"It seems I need to travel to the Isle of Man for a couple of weeks. I can take you with me. All expenses paid."

Carol gave him a momentary frown, before smiling. "Oh, how lovely? If the weather's nice we can spend some time at the beach. When do we leave?"

Hendley was not paying attention. If he had been, then he might have questioned why his wife seemed initially disturbed by the idea of visiting the small tourist island. Instead though, he was thinking back to the train from the other night; the train which pulled into an empty station and braked to a standstill. The train which certainly had a murderer on it at that very moment, for someone must have activated the brake; either the driver was alive and not yet murdered, or the murderer pulled the brake. Hendley was stood in an empty station, in the middle of nowhere, with a mass-murderer not even yards away from him, and he had not spotted or heard a soul.

A shiver ran down Hendley's spine.

“Philip!” Carol cried out.

Hendley jumped to attention. “Sorry dear, miles away. What did you say?”

\* \* \* \* \*

“I saw Ghostbusters three times already!” Graham boasted.

Ian sneered back at the boy. “So? I saw it before anyone else on the island.”

“No you didn’t, you spaz. You’re such a liar.” Graham stated, pushing Ian a little as the three kids walked.

“Did too!” Ian pushed the boy back. “My uncle is the projectionist at the cinema. He let me see the film a week before anyone else.”

“Why didn’t you invite us then?” Adam asked, asking the question everyone else seemed to be missing.

Ian sniffed, then shrugged. “Forgot.”

“Some friend you are.” Graham moaned. “Div.”

“You’re a div.” Ian mumbled.

They silently walked down Birch Hill Crescent, before Graham asked. “Do you think ghosts really exist?”

Adam shrugged. “I think something exists. I don’t know if ghosts or what, but something definitely feels off in the world, don’t you think?”

The truth was, at eight years old, Adam felt terribly amiss, as if something was very wrong with his life. He looked different than his family; felt more intelligent than his teachers; and generally felt out of place in the world. At his age, he should have been thinking about school, friends and playing, but instead all he felt was that he was in the wrong place with the wrong people. He knew his parents were not his real parents, but he did not dare talk about it with them and they never brought it up. But he could tell. It was not that they were bad parents, not at all. They cared for him, loved him, challenged him, and never gave away that he was adopted. But he simply did not feel the connection to them that he should have. They had different hair, different eyes, different everything.

Overall, the atmosphere on the Isle of Man felt thick, so thick you could cut it with a knife. People knew things, rumours, stories, going back for generations that the island harboured an evil which would one day threaten the world. Someone once told him a story about witches on the island. A year before, he was with his family in Silverglen when he overheard a local talking about witches; about how they inhabited the island and that really, if you looked close enough, you would realise that they had never left.

Of course, most people laughed at such talk, but if you spoke to the older inhabitants, they would tell you that there was always some truth to the myth.

That being said, Adam was always surrounded by the best group of friends, and this would also be reflected when he grew up, when he would come to rely on his friends more than ever.

“I heard people talk about witches on the island.” Adam told the group. “Not pointy hat, wart covered things, like, proper witches. Ones you can’t tell if they are human or evil or whatever.”

“I think you watch too many horror films.” Ian replied.

“I think I read a Roald Dahl book about that recently.” Graham laughed.

“Stop making fun of me and listen. If there are witches here, shouldn’t we find them? Make people aware of the fact that there are witches here?”



Ian sighed. “Adam, I like the fact that you and I are friends. I like the fact that when I came up with a rocket which almost blew up my house, you were the one to correct my calculations. I even like the fact that you don’t make fun of the fact that I’m top of our class at maths.” Ian explained.

“I’m top of our class.” Adam pointed out.

“No, you’re not. But, just remember one thing. Although we are a group of chess players and more advanced intelligence kids, we *are* still eight year olds who no-one would ever believe. Especially if we turn up claiming witches were here.” Ian took a deep breath. “Come on, let’s go down to the glen.”

“My mum says I’m not allowed down that far.” Graham complained. “She’ll kill me if something happens to me.”

Adam agreed. “Yeah, I don’t think we should be that far away. It’ll be home time soon, and I’ll get in trouble if I’m not around.”

“What are you afraid of? Nothing *ever* happens here.” Ian said, walking on. Graham and Adam looked at one another, sighed, and walked on.

“Didn’t we *just* talk about witches on the island?” Graham called after Ian. “They are what I’m afraid of.”

“There’s no proof there are witches.”

“My brother says that if we go that direction we have to pass through enemy territory.” Adam told them.

“There’s no such thing.” Ian replied.

“Yes there is.” Graham countered. “We are going towards Onchan School there, and they are our sworn enemies.” The kids went to Ashley Hill Primary School, the second of the two main primary schools.

“Have you even met anyone from Onchan School?” Ian asked him.

“Yeah. Well, no. But still.”

“Come on, you wimps!”

The sun shone on the island that day, something which rarely happened on the Isle of Man which was more frequently battered by wind and rain. The Isle of Man was most famous for its motorbike race, which took place annually; the Manx cat, a tailless creature which was said to be half-cat, half-rabbit; and its lack of speed-limits; not that you could go too fast on the twisting hilly roads. Life on the island was free and safe, with a very low crime rate, meaning parents rarely worried for the safety of their children. Crime was so rare that the island even had the unknown punishment of flogging by birch, which was never used.

It was with that in mind that the boys walked down through the various estates, until they came upon a country path. In the distance, surrounded by trees, they could see a green barn.

“Race you there.” Ian laughed, running on. The others chased after him, laughing.

The barn was barely visible within the trees. As they came closer, they noticed a black Vauxhall Cavalier parked just meters away from the front of the barn. A small door to the barn was open revealing nothing but darkness. The boys dropped down into some nearby bushes and long grass, at the top of a small incline and watched.

“Dad said that barn has been abandoned for years.” Graham said. “He was thinking of buying it once but it didn’t work out.”

“Maybe somebody has?” Adam countered.

Graham shook his head. “Nobody owns it.”

“Someone has to own it, even if it’s the state.”

“That’s the thing. On all the maps it’s marked as secure land. Some sort of Ministerial stuff. Maybe they store weapons there.”

Ian looked baffled. “On the Isle of Man? Unlikely. Anyway, if the British government were storing weapons there, wouldn’t they secure it in some way? Or at least put a fence up?”

“What do you think it is then?” Graham asked.

“I dunno. But you won’t get UK government land here.” Ian said. “Dad said to me that the UK government had very limited rights.”

Adam nodded. “He’s right Graham, the UK has no jurisdiction. They would need permission from the Tynwald, and that won’t ever happen.” The Isle of Man had a very specific set of rules, and even though the Queen was head of state, the British government had very little influence on the day to day running of the island. The Tynwald was the legislative council for the Isle of Man, and the oldest system of continuous parliamentary body in the world. Only they could decide on whether or not Britain could build on the Isle of Man. “Anyway, why would the Tynwald or the British government want a shed?”

They stared at the barn. “So what is it then?” Graham asked.

“Maybe it’s just a barn.” Adam replied, though his thumping heart told him otherwise. “We should go.”

“I agree.” Said Graham.

“I don’t. Anyway, look.” Ian pointed. In the distance they could see a man walking a dog. The man had a thick white beard, but otherwise looked very fit, maybe in his sixties. Whilst he just seemed to be walking his dog, he did walk carefully, slowly, looking at the barn in only the most fleeting of glances. He stepped over to the Cavalier and peered inside the window, before looking around. Seeing no-one, he tried the right-side car doors, but neither opened. With a frown, he walked off. “I’m going down to take a closer look.” Ian whispered.

Adam tried to grab him but missed. “Ian, you div!” He half whispered, half shouted.

Ian slid down a small bank to the car which he crouched behind. Trying the boot lock, it clicked and opened. He gave the others the thumbs up with a grin. He was about to rifle through the boot when something in the barn caught his eye. Leaving the boot open, he ran to the open door of the barn and peered inside. Looking up at the others, he mouthed, “*it’s empty*”, before sliding inside cautiously.

“If it’s empty, why’s he going inside?” Graham mumbled. “It’s not exactly a big barn; more of a large shed really.”

“You know what he’s like.”

They sat waiting for a number of minutes, before Adam began to get worried. “Where is he?”

“He’s been in there awhile. Should we go take a look?”

“We should go get help.” Adam replied.

“He’s probably just messing around. We’ll go down there and he’ll jump us.”

Graham stood up and slid down the bank. With a sigh, Adam followed him. Working as a team, Graham ran over to the door and peered inside the barn, as Adam ran to the boot of the car. Inside the boot were files, each with a different location attached to it, some on the Isle of Man, but most on the mainland. Lying in the boot was an old dirty black book with a folded piece of paper stuck out of it. He pulled out the paper and read a short note, “*Bible of some sort?*” Adam opened the book but it was written in some form of scribbles which initially he deemed to be Arabic.

“I don’t see him.” Graham called out. “It’s empty in there.”

Adam opened up a file marked Abertafol, revealing black and white photos of dead bodies on a train. With a shock, he shut the file quickly and grabbed the black book.

“I’m going in to take a look.” Graham shouted.

Adam peered out from behind the car. “Graham stop!” The boy was one foot in the doorway when he turned to look at Adam. “We should go.” Adam told him.

“But Ian...”

“Graham. Let’s go, *now*.”

Graham stared at his friend, then nodded, pulling his leg back out of the doorway and walking away. “What are we going to do?”

“We’re going to go home and say nothing.”

“Why? What about Ian?”

“I think he’s dead. As is the MI5 agent the Cavalier belonged to. Hendley.”

“How do you know he was MI5?”

“Files in his car. All marked Security Service, Eyes Only, signed for by Hendley.”

Search parties were sent out that night. The boys were questioned, but they stuck to their story; that Ian ran off, and the boys were playing somewhere else. That night, Graham cried himself to sleep, but Adam lay awake, staring at the ceiling, and wondering what was happening, and why felt that someone was inside the barn, someone or something, which was not human.

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The doorbell chimed a little before 4pm. Carol Hendley opened the door to two gentlemen in suits. Carol gave them a gentle smile and nodded. “Yes? May I help you gentlemen?”

“Sorry to bother you Mrs Hendley. MI5. We’re looking for your husband, Phillip. He hasn’t checked in for a while, and he should have returned from the Isle of Man by now. Would he be home by chance?”

Carol put a hand to her heart and looked concerned. “Oh no. No, Phillip came home with me, we were both in the Isle of Man together, you see. I have the ferry stubs somewhere if you need them for anything. But he dashed off again, something about a better lead up North.”

The men gave each other a quick glance and continued. “Did he mention anything whilst on the Isle of Man, ma’am?”

“Not really. We had such a wonderful time there, but he was a bit grumbly. Something about it being a waste of time on the island, but at least he could get a bit of a holiday out of it.”

“I see. Did he mention where up North he was headed?”

“Yes. Sleaford, in Lincolnshire.”

They each checked to see if the other had any more questions before nodding and giving a weak smile. “Thank you, madam.”

They turned to leave, but she stopped them. “Has something happened to my Phillip?” She asked, both hands on her heart now.

Once again they looked at each other, then gave what could have been construed as a grimace-smile. “I’m sure he’s fine ma’am. Just off the radar a bit.”

Carol nodded and smiled, watching the men retreat to their car and drive off. Shutting the door, Carol glanced across to the blonde girl peering behind the curtain in her sitting room. “Well done Venus.” Carol told her, before flicking her wrist. As she did, Carol changed, becoming younger, taller, and fitter. Her hair became jet black and long, her wide eyes becoming a dark green.

“They’ll be back after he does not appear, of course.” The soft spoken voice said from behind the curtain.

“I will deal with that when it arises. Just be glad it is off the island and MI5 is off our backs. The book was retrieved. Everything is going to plan.”

“For now.” Venus frowned.

## One – 10 years later

The year was 1994. Wet Wet Wet's Love is All Around was number one for what would be a very long summer for them. Friends was coming onto television, and Pulp Fiction was just weeks away from being released. More importantly, world politics was changing. Czechoslovakia had split peacefully, Yugoslavia was at war, and Nelson Mandela had become the first black president of South Africa. The nineties was a decade of change which saw the World Wide Web change the way the world reached news and data.

However, for Adam, things were about to seriously change in ways he couldn't possibly imagine. At that very moment, though, he was out trying to celebrate his upcoming eighteenth birthday, with *trying* being the operative word.

*"In other news, British business operating systems company Logical Extrusions, has agreed to a take-over bid by the venture capital giant, CurrenTrent Monies. CurrenTrent is expected to pay a little over eighty-million dollars for the struggling software house, which has failed to compete with competitors Microsoft and IBM.*

*"The market was taken a little by surprise by the acquisition, especially leading up to Microsoft's expected next-generation Windows based operating system."* The Sky News business report droned on in the background.

Adam sat in a bar, watching the television on the wall, and waiting for his friend Brian to return with beer. He had zoned out, not really paying attention to the non-stop news channel; rather considering the first eighteen years of his life, feeling a little jaded that the belief that he was somehow different, or special, had not come to fruition.

"To turning eighteen, finally." Brian laughed, raising his pint of Stella.

"Just because you're an old man." Brian was only ten months older than Adam, but he was frequently the butt of all the old-man jokes.

Adam had been waiting for this birthday, the eighteenth, with some trepidation. He thought back to his sixteenth birthday, it was the moment when he felt something change inside him.

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