

# Queen Bee

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Penguin  
Random House  
UK

First published 2020  
001

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Set in 12.5/14.75 pt Garamond MT Std  
Typeset by Jouve (UK), Milton Keynes  
Printed and bound in Great Britain by Clays Ltd, Elcograf S.p.A.

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-405-94334-5



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Dedication TK



# Prologue

Am I really going to do this?

Angie gives me an almost imperceptible nod. I pull open the drawer. At first glance, it's crammed full of what look like official documents. Contracts and letters.

'It's just more paperwork,' I say. 'Probably stuff about the business that's confidential.'

'Anything else?' she asks, disappointed.

I scabble to the bottom of the pile. There's something underneath. A metal box, like one of those ones people use to put petty cash in. Red. About thirty centimetres wide. 'Where's that other key?' I say, and even to my own ears my voice sounds wobbly. 'You really won't tell anyone about this, will you, Ange? Anyone?'

'Of course I won't,' she says, going for the top-right-hand drawer again. 'It'd make me look as bad as you.'

It takes her a moment to locate the tiny key. I know just from looking at the lock that it's going to fit, and it does. I open the box before I can change my mind.

There's not much in there. Disappointingly little, in fact. I glance out at the main office again, and then I tip the contents out on to the floor. There are a couple of envelopes, a receipt from Cartier, a small box containing a tacky gold sovereign ring, large enough to fit a man's finger. I open the first envelope. A card. A print of a garish painting of Paris. Inside, in curly, cursive handwriting, a note.

*Thank you for the best 2 days ever. Love u. F xxx*

There are crudely drawn hearts covering the bottom half of the card.

‘Whoever she is, she’s young,’ I say.

‘Does the pope shit in the woods?’ Angie says, reaching for the second envelope. ‘F. Have you come across any Fs? Any Fionas or Fays hanging round your way?’

I shake my head. I snap a quick photo of the message on my phone. Angie has pulled another card from the second envelope. A photo of a kitten sitting in a large coffee cup.

She goes to open it.

There’s a shout. A man’s voice. ‘Ange! Angie!’

The pair of us freeze.