

Jane smiled, hoping Danny's words were true and that having spent a childhood bereft of love, he'd finally found some joy. She reached into her jacket pocket and produced Khaleesi's copy of his latest book, eager to contribute to Danny's newly found contentment.

"Mr. King, you met my daughters at the most recent Comic Con in New York and took a picture with them. My youngest is named Khaleesi."

The man's eyes lit up, and he smiled for the second time during the conversation. "Yes, I remember! She was dressed as Arya with her sister as Sansa—Felicity, I think the name was."

"Yes. Khaleesi asked if you could autograph her copy of your latest puzzle book." Jane, about to place it on the desk, was stopped with a hand gesture.

Danny wriggled in delight. "Of course." He donned another pair of gloves, took the paperback, and began writing on the inside cover with a marker. Once done, he closed the cover and returned Khaleesi's treasured possession to Jane.

"You don't know how lucky you are, Detective Jane."

"Oh, how so?"

"After taking that picture, your kids mentioned you would pick them up at the end of the day. They knew how much I adore detective stories, so they regaled me about their hero detective mother. How you had recently been almost killed and promoted to sergeant! They were so proud of you! You should have seen the light in their eyes. They really love you, Detective Jane. Not out of obligation, like me for my mom. But for real."

Jane's eyes misted over. She wiped the tears away with her sleeve and rose. Since he was still wearing gloves, she reached out her hand, and they shook.

"Thank you, Danny. I look forward to seeing you again. Soon."

Once back in the car, Jane opened the puzzle book and read the inscription:

*To My Good Friend, Khaleesi*

*Best Wishes*

*Danny King*

*P.S. Hold The Door!*

Jane laughed. During the pandemic, the girls had cajoled their parents into binge-watching all eight *Game of Thrones* seasons. She remembered the now-iconic line from “The Door,” her favorite episode. It had made her and Anna cry.

“Back to the office, Suzie.”

*And please, God, don't make Danny King a murderer.*