

Synopsis, *The Shark* (July 2022)

This detective story introduces DC **Ian Thompson**. It is part of at least a trilogy. The story covers two timelines presented as inter-locking parts. It is circa 80,000 words long.

One narrative covers Ian's childhood. It begins with Ian (6) arriving at an orphanage after his parents are killed in a fire. Ian is suffering from PTSD and undiagnosed Alexithymia (sufferers have difficulty interpreting emotions, their own and others').

Ian falls under the control of **Andrew (The Shark) Shardlow** (13). Shardlow gets Ian to steal for him and to act as a guard whilst Shardlow molests **Sarah**, another resident. Ian also befriends **Gemma** (10).

In an inciting incident Ian provides Shardlow with an alibi when Sarah complains. Sarah later absconds from the home and kills herself.

To protect Gemma, Ian (10) conspires successfully to have Shardlow moved from the home. At 13 Ian is in love with Gemma (17). She is now an aspiring hair stylist. She rejects him and he reunites with Shardlow and starts selling drugs for him. Ian is addicted to risk taking, the "Tightrope" feeling being one of the few emotions he recognises.

When 16, Shardlow seeks Ian's help to pursue Gemma. Ian appears to agree but in a powerful climax gives Gemma the money he has made selling drugs, so she can start her career. She agrees to take the money only when Ian promises to report Shardlow to the police, and seek psychological help. Shardlow is arrested and goes to jail.

The second narrative thread jumps 7 years to an apparently coincidental meeting of Shardlow and Ian. Ian is now a DC, one of the reasons he joined the police is to investigate the deaths of his parents. Shardlow is going straight, dealing in second hand goods. The reader learns later Shardlow engineered the meeting.

Ian is a junior detective part of a team investigating the death of **Tracey Turner**. The reader sees Tracey's kidnapping and recognise the kidnapper could be Shardlow. Other suspects include Tracey's ex-boyfriend **Michael Wyatt**, an unnamed 3rd party or (later) even Ian.

Shardlow's trading name (**Nye**) comes up in the investigation and Ian and a DS go to see him, as Nye. Neither Ian nor Shardlow want their shared history uncovered and they pretend not to know each other. Later Shardlow fabricates evidence that implicates Ian in Tracey's murder.

The investigation team begin to suspect Ian of being in league with Shardlow and set a trap for him. In a "long night of the soul" scene he decides to reveal Nye is Shardlow. He knows doing so will help the investigation, but probably doom his career.

With other detectives Ian stands watch over Shardlow's terrace house, believing it has only one entrance. Gemma, in whom Ian has confided, sneaks into the house from a back way, looking for the fabricated evidence. This is her way of paying back what she sees as a debt to Ian.

Shardlow also enters that way. They struggle and Shardlow is killed by Gemma. Gemma escapes, taking the damning evidence.

Ian finds and quietly picks up Gemma's earring but does nothing with it.

THIS SYNOPSIS IS MEANT FOR AGENTS AND PUBLISHERS – CARE IT CONTAINS SPOILERS

The death of Shardlow closes that aspect of the investigation and (for now) Ian's connection to Shardlow remains unknown to the other characters.

The story concludes with the death of The Shark.

BOOKS 2 and 3 Mini Synopses.

Book 2 – The Phoenix explores the death of Ian's parents at the hands of an IRA cell plotting the 1990 mortar bomb attack on 10 Downing Street, and Ian's attempted revenge on the killer. 50% written.

Book 3 – Untitled 50% Written, leads to the uncovering of Shardlow as the killer, but also places Ian as prime suspect in a double murder, one of the victims being the detective who led the Tracey Turner investigation.