

Matthew Costello

Neil Richards

# CHERRINGHAM

A COSY CRIME SERIES

## Death on a Summer Night



# Contents

Cover

Cherringham — A Cosy Crime Series

The Authors

Main Characters

Death on a Summer Night

Copyright

1. Cherringham — 1989

2. The Wrong Way Home

3. Twenty-Five Years Later

4. A Killer Returns

5. A Sleepless Night

6. Lost Years

7. Fresh Air

8. A Cold Heart

9. Reunion at the Angel

10. A Deadly Threat

11. The Conductor

12. Ghost Train

13. Kingfisher Lake

14. Secrets of the Lake

15. Into the Deep

16. On the Bottom

17. Fireworks

18. Amends

# **Cherringham — A Cosy Crime Series**

“Cherringham — A Cosy Crime Series” is a series made up of self-contained stories. A new episode is released each month. The series is published in English as well as in German, and is only available in e-book form.

## The Authors

**Matthew Costello** (US-based) is the author of a number of successful novels, including *Vacation* (2011), *Home* (2014) and *Beneath Still Waters* (1989), which was adapted by Lionsgate as a major motion picture. He has written for The Disney Channel, BBC, SyFy and has also designed dozens of bestselling games including the critically acclaimed *The 7th Guest*, *Doom 3*, *Rage* and *Pirates of the Caribbean*.

**Neil Richards** has worked as a producer and writer in TV and film, creating scripts for BBC, Disney, and Channel 4, and earning numerous Bafta nominations along the way. He's also written script and story for over 20 video games including *The Da Vinci Code* and *Starship Titanic*, co-written with Douglas Adams, and consults around the world on digital storytelling.

His writing partnership with NYC-based Matt Costello goes back to the late 90's and the two have written many hours of TV together. *Cherringham* is their first crime fiction as co-writers.

## Main Characters

**Jack Brennan** is a former NYPD homicide detective who lost his wife a year ago. Being retired, all he wants is peace and quiet. Which is what he hopes to find in the quiet town of Cherringham, UK. Living on a canal boat, he enjoys his solitude. But soon enough he discovers that something is missing — the challenge of solving crimes. Surprisingly, Cherringham can help him with that.

**Sarah Edwards** is a web designer who was living in London with her husband and two kids. Two years ago, he ran off with his sexy American boss, and Sarah's world fell apart. With her children she moved back to her home town, laid-back Cherringham. But the small town atmosphere is killing her all over again — nothing ever happens. At least, that's what she thinks until Jack enters her life and changes it for good or worse ...



Matthew Costello  
Neil Richards

**CHERRINGHAM**  
**A COSY CRIME SERIES**



**Death on a Summer Night**



# »be« by BASTEI ENTERTAINMENT

Digital original edition

»be« by Bastei Entertainment is an imprint of Bastei Lübbe AG

Copyright © 2014/2017 by Bastei Lübbe AG, Schanzenstraße 6-20, 51063  
Cologne, Germany

Written by Matthew Costello and Neil Richards

Edited by Victoria Pepe

Project management: Lori Herber

Cover illustration: © shutterstock: Buslik/Peter Gudella/stocker1970/Jultud

Cover design: Jeannine Schmelzer

eBook production: Urban [SatzKonzept](#), Düsseldorf

ISBN 978-3-8387-4844-3

[www.be-ebooks.com](http://www.be-ebooks.com)

Twitter: [@be\\_ebooks\\_com](https://twitter.com/be_ebooks_com)

## 1. Cherringham — 1989

Tim stopped the car, the beaten-up old Fiesta that he always bragged about keeping running and on the road.

*"Going to have my own shop someday," he'd say.*

His future always so clear to him.

But now the car's windows were broken and jammed shut with rolled up bits of cigarette packet. And on this record-breaking night the air felt stifling to the girl sitting next to him. For Dinah Taylor, it was almost too hard to breathe.

He had pulled off the road, in a parking area where she guessed he might have brought other girls.

She wasn't naive enough to believe that she was the first girl he'd driven up here.

Not quite the same great view of Cherringham you'd get from Mabb's Hill; but despite that she could still see the fairground in the field down by the river, the rides lit up, flashes of red and yellow bright against the night sky.

Drifting up from the fair she could hear music.

Donna Summer's "I Feel Love" ...

Dinah loved that track so much.

*I could be down there now with Jen and Michelle, on the Dodgems, singing along, she thought.*

*"Ooh, I feel love, I feel love, I feel love ..."*

*Screaming and laughing with the girls in all that noise. Instead of being up here with Tim Bell.*

This place was quiet.

*Secluded.*

*Just the two of them.*

*On their own.*

And Dinah could tell that Tim had been drinking.



She had even said to him ... maybe they should stay at the fair, not drive off somewhere?

But Tim couldn't be put off.

*"Great night to be out, just driving around,"* he said.

*Driving around and melting was more like it,* Dinah thought.

Now, with the car stopped, Tim draped an arm around her.

Of course. Why else would he come here? No one around. A place to snog. But while Tim might have a lot of experience in that area, Dinah certainly didn't.

And now the question became for her ... *how do I get myself out of this?*

His hand tightened on her shoulder, touching bare skin, her summer dress sleeveless. Despite the oppressive heat, she wished she had something more on.

But when she threw off his hand, Tim only redoubled his efforts. His hand right back, tight there, pulling her close ... and now, his head leaning into her.

The smell of beer — maybe even whiskey — on his breath.

*She definitely had to end this.*

"Tim. I think we should go back."

"Back? God, Dinah. What do we want to do that for? Lousy fair, been on all the rides, done that. It's beautiful here. You're beautiful."

He had his eyes locked on hers, and then went to kiss her on the lips, just as she turned away.

It's not that she wasn't attracted to him.

Far from it, but ... they barely knew each other. There was a matter of respect.

That old expression.

*I'm not that kind of girl.*

But when she pulled away again as he tried to hug her close ...

"Hey, what the hell's wrong?"

Tim's eyes now looked glassy, even in the dark of the car, only the dashboard lights on, just a hint of reflection hitting them.

Drinking for sure, but had there been other things? Something else, some ... drug that someone had given him? She thought back to the fair: that bloke who worked the ghost train, with the leather jacket and the long hair. The one who'd been giving her the eye.

Maybe him?

He and Tim seemed to know each other. Talking and laughing together while she and the girls went on the big wheel.

She didn't like people doing drugs. A lot of her friends "experimented." None of that for her. The only experiments she would ever do took place in the school chemistry lab.

Then a shift in Tim ...

"What is it? I'm not good enough for you? That it? Then why ... why the bloody hell did you come out with me tonight?"

The air in the car felt even closer — as if there was no fresh air at all to be had outside. These past days had been so steamy, so hot, the humidity worse than she'd ever known.

And now Tim turned sullen, even angry.

"I—I just wanted to go out, have fun. With everyone. Didn't think—"

"Didn't think — *what*? That you and me'd end up here, that maybe I'd like a bloody kiss?" He leaned closer, the boozy smell strong ... "Or even something more?"

At that moment he grinned, and put his hand on her leg, just where the material of her skirt — maybe too short? — met bare skin.

She yelped. Then: "Stop. Just stop it, Tim!"

"Or what? You gonna do *what*? Long walk back to the village you know."

She pushed his hand away but he grabbed her wrist, so she slapped him, her nails catching his cheek, making it bleed.

He pulled back for a second, dabbed at his face

*And that was her chance.*

She reached down, popped open the door, and literally tumbled out of the passenger seat, scraping her shin as she fell.

Tim fell across the seat with her quick exit.

“Hey, Dinah? Bloody hell — where you going? Get back in here!”

But Dinah quickly got her footing and looked around for a path, a trail, somewhere she could go — that Tim couldn’t follow her in the car.

Not that she thought he’d actually hurt her. But if he was on ... something, added to the alcohol ... anything could happen.

*She had to get away.*

She saw what looked like a footpath leading out of the parking area, up a small hill to a thick squat tree, full with leaves, nearly blended into the dark sky.

But the spots where the tree blotted out stars showed its outline.

She scrambled up the path, now moving faster, turning around once to see Tim struggling to get out of the car, then looking around for her.

*She had — in those moments — disappeared in the night, just like the tree up ahead.*

As she followed the rutted path, she didn’t think about how far away they were, or how late it was, or what her father and mother would say when she finally got home.

Her parents had always been so clear about one thing.

*If you are in bad situation, do what you must to get away.*

And that’s precisely what she had done.