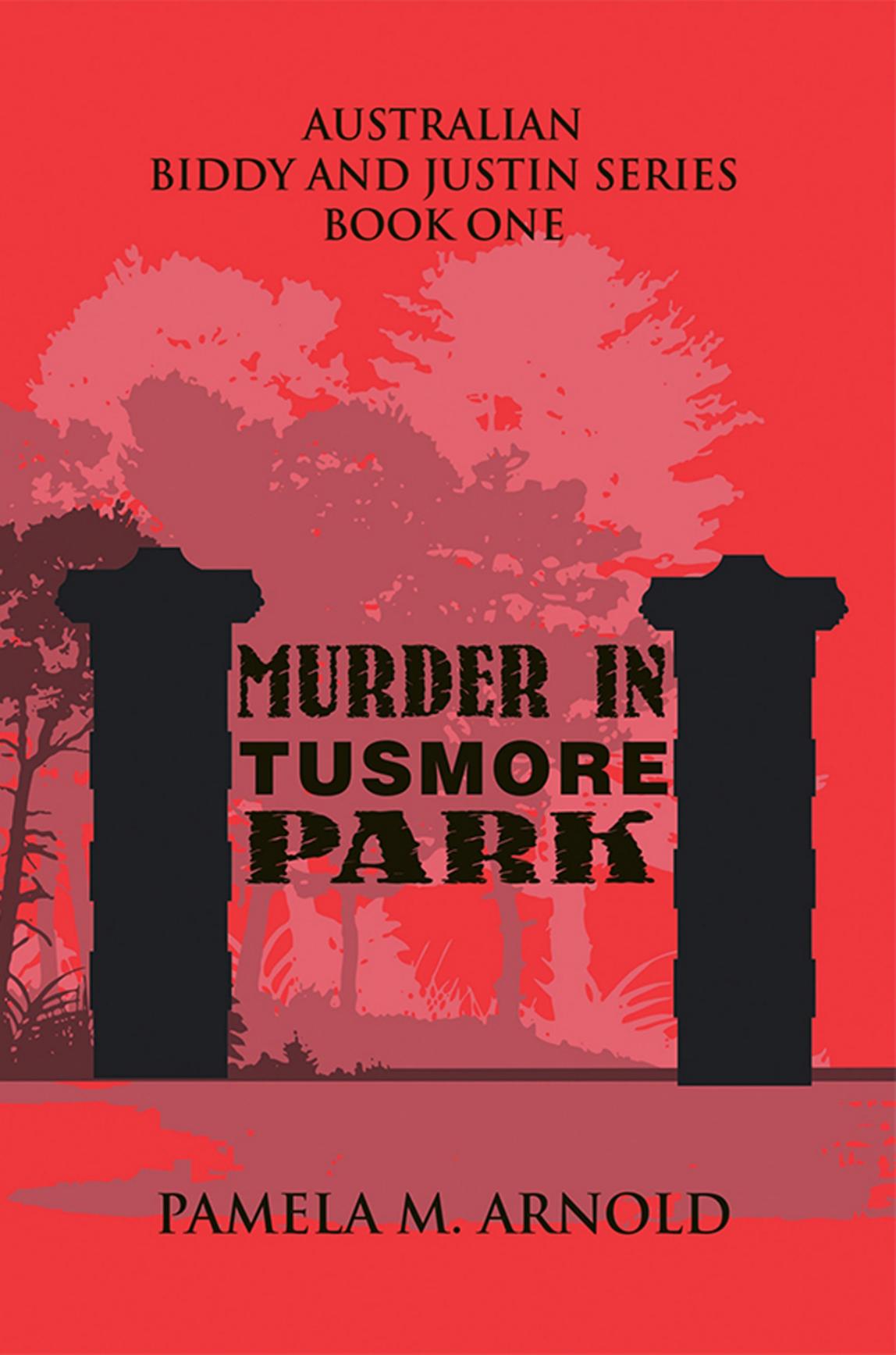


AUSTRALIAN
BIDDY AND JUSTIN SERIES
BOOK ONE



**MURDER IN
TUSMORE
PARK**

PAMELA M. ARNOLD

Murder in Tusmore Park

Biddy and Justin Series

Book I

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Biddy and Justin Series
Book I

Pamela M. Arnold



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DEDICATION

To SHERYL HOLLAND, my fantastic former PA, who encouraged me with this manuscript and through the traumatic transition from business into retirement.

OTHER TITLES

By Pamela M. Arnold
Pacific Incident 9-11-13

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CHAPTER 1

Arriving home after their overwhelming experience on a three-month Pacific cruise, Biddy Jennings and her partner, Justin Fuller, found it took them a few days to get over the motion sickness and recover their land legs. They were pleased to find that, in their absence, their architect friend Steve Cilento had completed the extension to Justin's duplex. The main bedroom was now more spacious, and Biddy loved the adjacent hexagonal balcony overlooking Tusmore Park.

Considering the events that had occurred well before their exciting Pacific cruise, Biddy decided it was time to sit down and describe the harrowing murders in which she and Justin had been embroiled. After all, she had promised her fellow passengers she would tell the full story. Thinking back, she vividly remembered Justin, his face white—

For the first time in his sixty-two years, Justin Fuller became aware of a tremor in his hand as he replaced the receiver on the house phone.

“What's up?” Biddy asked, staring at her lover. In the time they had been together she had never seen him in such a state, slumped in his wing chair and pale under his tan.

“He’s dead. The Old Codger. Lying there in front of that park bench, Biddy, where you often sit after walking with the dogs.”

“Dead! Heart attack?” she asked, looking dubiously at his bloodstained jacket.

“Murdered.” Justin rubbed a hand over his face and then grimaced at the dried blood on his hand. “Murdered!”

They both started at the wail of a siren as a police car approached Tusmore Park, where the body lay just opposite his town house. Justin was wiping his hand. “That was quick; I only phoned a moment ago.”

“Some bystander with a mobile.” Biddy was concerned; it was rare for Justin to be rattled and upset, even given the unusual circumstances.

“It’s frightful. That poor old chap.” Justin’s voice trailed off.

“A terrible shock for you, darling. What if I make you a cuppa?” Biddy asked, patting his arm.

Justin mopped the back of his neck and forehead with a tissue. “Tea would be great. What a thing to happen! Just as well you dropped in, Bid. It’s—it was such a shock finding him like that.” Justin’s deep voice had become husky.

Biddy felt a pang of compunction; it really had given her bossy old boy a terrible fright.

Justin rose and rushed toward the bathroom, his hand covering his mouth. “I have to, to—” He disappeared, leaving Biddy staring at the empty doorway.

Feeling queasy herself, Biddy filled the electric jug. *We’re inclined to forget we’re in our sixties until something like this happens*, she thought. She shook her head at Justin’s small black and white dog, comfortably ensconced on the couch under the windows.

Puffer kept his head down, giving her a Lady Di look from under his black panda-bear brows, guilt written on his flat face.

“Bad boy, Puffer. Down.” She gestured to him and, moving to the left, slid open the paned patio door. “Outside! Now!” she commanded. “Even if you were his partner in crime, Justin is likely to yell at you. He’s upset enough.”

Puffer reluctantly slid off the couch, tail low, giving an insolent stretch, then a defiant shake to re-establish his self-esteem before he eased through onto the patio where he paused to give Bidy a reproachful look.

As Justin returned, she stepped over and gave him a hug, then, slipping her right hand under his arm and cradling it with her left, she eased him back toward his favourite wing chair. “You’ll feel better after a cup of tea, darling. While the jug boils, tell me all about it.”

Justin cleared his throat. “Puffer and I were on our way back from our morning walk when—” The gate chimes pealed. “Damn, that is probably the police.” He started to rise.

Bidy placed her hand on his shoulder. “Stay there. I’ll get the door.” Leaning over she gave him a quick kiss on his damp forehead. “Don’t look so anxious—you didn’t do it. It’s not your fault that you were the first on the scene.”

“How will they know I didn’t do it?” Justin seemed to have lost his breath.

Bidy glanced back over her shoulder. “It’s just too ridiculous. Why would you want to harm that old chap? Why would anyone for that matter?” She shrugged as she left the room. *The Old Codger must have been about ninety; couldn’t have had much longer to go anyway*, she thought.

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