

## BRICKBURN - A Novel by Karl Meade

Livingston Alberti's long goodbye began three years ago, when he failed to save his family during a home invasion. He awoke from a coma three months later, with a tumour in his head, to find his wife and son dead, and his thirteen-year-old daughter Melonie living with his sister, Aeolia. Now his time is up, the doctors tell him, but he keeps quiet. He wants Melonie back. He needs to tell her this story, what he and the Alberti family have done, how they got into this mess, so she can live her life clear and free. But Livingston has another problem: his lifelong friend, Detective Wood, names him the prime suspect in the collapse of his father Albert's architectural masterpiece, the Sandstone Novella, in which Albert's body is allegedly found.

Wood pressures Livingston, and has him followed by private detective Porphyry Petrovitch, an old flame of Albert's from the '60s. Livingston's sister, Aeolia—Albert's project manager on the Novella—becomes Wood's other lead suspect. Aeolia confronts Livingston, who admits he wired the Novella, just as he and Aeolia had planned. They'd discovered that Albert had cut corners on the Novella; if opened to the public, it could kill hundreds. But Livingston insists to Aeolia he hadn't set the detonators yet—someone else must've got in.

When Melonie disappears, Livingston and Aeolia's frantic search leads them to their family's old Brickburn mansion. They are stunned to find Albert strolling up the Brickburn pathway, arm in arm with Porphyry Petrovitch. Albert admits that he set off the detonators, and that he plans to leave his fortune to Ivan Petrovitch, his illegitimate son by Porphyry. Detective Wood descends on the gathering, declares that the body in the rubble is Ivan Petrovitch, leader of Calgary's homeless rights movement. Albert's building has killed his own son.

Meanwhile, Melonie has been taken hostage in Livingston's apartment by a homeless disciple of Ivan Petrovitch. The building has been wired to collapse—in exactly the same way that Albert's Novella crushed "Brother Ivan." Livingston sneaks into his apartment to save Melonie, but in his struggle with the hostage-taker, detonates the building.

Twenty-five years later, Melonie, the story's true narrator, has changed her name to give her son a clean start, and has pieced together the story her father tried to tell her. Livingston died that night in her lap, after letting Detective Wood overhear his lie that cleared Albert of the Novella destruction. Now Porphyry, Aeolia, and Melonie jointly run Ivan's homeless movement, funded by Albert and Livingston's legacy assets.