

The Snow Queen

A She-Wolf of London / Olympics Crossover

by Deb Walsh



an, I can't believe you managed to con Skip into letting us come to Norway," Randi Wallace gushed, ogling the colorfully-dressed Norwegians performing at the opening ceremonies.

"What con? You know part of our funding came from the Beverly Hills Figure Skating Club — someone from KBLA would have been tasked with the assignment. I merely pointed out to him that the Olympics were a tremendous ratings draw, and that the Norwegians have a culture rich in mythology — an ideal and rarely-used angle on the Olympics."

"Uh-huh," Randi agreed doubtfully. "Tell that to Hal Carsons — he thought he had it all sewn up, what with being head sports commentator and all."

"Hal Carsons hates figure skating, and that's what brings the ratings. Also the dollars, since no one would be here from KBLA if not for the BHFSC," Ian pointed out less than graciously.

"Which is great — we don't have to spend any time out in the cold covering the luge or the biathlon, whatever the hell that is — but it still doesn't explain why us," she challenged sarcastically.

Ian brandished his program at her. "Look at that. Look at what they have planned for the evening program. Then tell me that we're not the perfect commentators for KBLA."

Randi studied the brochure, her eyes widening as she read the description of the festivities planned to follow the lighting of the Olympic torch. "Vetter?"

"Vetter. Norwegian earth spirits. The Norwegians believe in these little creatures, and tonight they're going to introduce them to the world."

"You had no way of knowing about this," Randi told him suspiciously.

"Of course not. But Skip doesn't have to know that, and neither does Hal," he concluded, grinning broadly at her. She hit him with the program, and returned her attention to the spectacle below.



he third member of the KBLA team at the 1994 Winter Olympics in Lillehammer, Norway was Carl Bradshaw. Carl was a recent graduate of the UCLA Film School, and this was his first job as a cameraman. Skip Seville, station manager for the Los Angeles UHF station KBLA, had selected him for the trip not for his skill, but for his price — as an apprentice cameraman, his salary was lower than anyone else's on the payroll with the exception of the station accountant.

Since their living expenses were being picked up by the Beverly Hills Skating Club, the trio had been given a modest, that is to say, one-step-above-subsistence-level budget for their stay in Norway. Carl had been delighted when Ian Matheson, the star of *How Strange*, had opted to subsidize the budget from his own cash reserves. The trio shared a three-room suite at a hotel outside of Lillehammer, and Carl was actually able to afford to eat during the trip. At 6'2", eating was one of Carl's favorite occupations, immediately following girl-watching. He'd agreed to come on the assignment because of the opportunity to film girls in scanty skating outfits, and was not averse to spending the majority of his time in the Northern Lights Hall taping skating practices.

On the first day of practice, he joined Ian and his producer, Randi Wallace, in the hall, and set up his equipment to capture the pairs in practice. He was disappointed to note that most skaters started practice in warm clothing, with tights or leggings, and sweatshirts. Even when the sweatshirts and sweaters were removed to reveal practice leotards, no cleavage presented itself for recording. But he continued to hope.

Randi was convinced that Carl Bradshaw was a young Skip Seville in the making. His primary expressions alternated between leers and puzzled frowns, but his camera technique was surprisingly good, and he always managed to get the lens in focus in time for Ian's reports. Talent might just save him from becoming as smarmy and useless as their boss.

Surprisingly, the practice sessions in Northern Lights Hall were sparsely attended. The pairs teams shared the ice amicably enough, but the stands were nearly empty, except for a few die-hard fans and members of the press. There, she could see Scott Hamilton, the 1984 gold medalist from Sarajevo. And up there ... could that be Dick Button? She always had to remind herself that the ABC commentator had started his career as a ground-breaking skater in the '40s. And over there ... Bryant Gumball? No, Greg Gumbel, that was his name, Bryant's brother. He was anchor for the CBS prime-time coverage. Word had it that by the time the ladies hit the ice, the stands would be full to bursting, mostly with the press corps, and Randi was grateful they'd already staked out their little space in the arena at this early date. She was as hungry as every other member of the press for the Kerrigan-Harding gossip, but she was here as much to watch the skating. A total klutz, Randi had once dreamed of Olympic ice. This was the closest she'd ever get.

Now, that was odd. Two strange little men seemed to be skulking at the far end of the rink, gesticulating at each other in a pantomime of argument. One kept pointing to the ice, where the returning pro pair, Gordeeva and Grinkov, practiced their technical program. The other one shook his head violently, pointing to some vague space beyond the rink. Randi was about to say something to Ian when he jumped up and waved at Jenni Meno and Todd Sand, the U.S. national championship pair skaters and their first interview subjects. The odd pair of men were quickly forgotten in the excitement of meeting the premiere skating duo of the United States.

There were already several interviews and a couple of commentaries on Norwegian folklore in the can when Randi, Ian and Carl took their seats for the pairs' long program. Carl had taken care of Federal Expressing the videotape back to Los Angeles, where it would be edited and snipped into the news broadcasts in the days to come. Carl had his minicam ready, and was playing with the sound levels as the music started for Shishkova and Naumov, one of the Russian pairs. Randi wrapped her arms around Ian's arm, giving it an enthusiastic squeeze. While Skip had been niggardly with living money, he'd been lavish with money for tickets to the events, and the three KBLA staffers had excellent seats looking out onto the ice.

"I'm gonna go down and see if I can get a better shot," Carl announced and stumbled and tripped his way out of the row to the aisle.

"Some day perhaps he'll grow into his feet," Ian commented after Carl had gone.

"Somehow, I doubt it," Randi rejoined, then giggled, returning her attention to the ice.

With the exception of the German pair, the female of whom made a spectacular and painful five-point landing on the ice, the evening went pretty much without incident, and it was not surprising when Gordeeva and Grinkov captured the gold. Mishkutenok and Dmitriev had given a passionate performance, but the classical lines and fabulous lifts of the Muscovite pair had caught the attention of the judges and garnered the highest marks. Once or twice during the evening, Randi had absently noted the presence of the odd little men she'd seen at the practice

sessions, but it didn't really register. All her attention was focussed on the magic on ice.

W

e've got an interview with Steven Cousins at 2:00," Ian announced, very pleased with himself.

Randi consulted her list of male competitors. "Ian, he's English."

"I know that," Ian replied archly. "And he's no relation to Robin Cousins, but he's got quite a future ahead of him."

"But we're here to cover the American skaters, not the English ones. Skip'll have a cow."

"Do him good," Ian countered. "Everyone is talking to the American skaters — you can't get near Brian Boitano for the news media. And it's just as bad with Viktor Petrenko — these professionals coming back have caused quite a stir here. No, I'm going to interview Steven Cousins, and that's that. Let Skip have a cow. By the time he sees the tape, it'll be too late. Besides, Mum loves him."

Randi sighed. Ian was letting God, Queen and country get in the way again. She watched the famous 1988 gold medalist, Brian Boitano, practice a triple lutz, double toe loop combination, sighing with admiration as he executed it perfectly. She'd seen Boitano in exhibition a couple of times, and he'd always been spectacular. She fully anticipated that Boitano, the spearhead of the pros returning to amateur competition, would repeat that 1988 magic here on the Hamar Olympic ice. As the U.S. Nationals Champion, Scott Davis, attempted a triple salchow and failed, she noticed the men again, and this time they weren't arguing. They were grinning broadly, pointing at Davis as he recovered the jump. Boy, some people just had no sporting spirit.

O

ver the next couple of days of practice, Randi noticed the men again and again, frequently just before or after a disastrous practice move by one of the competitors. Finally, she nudged Ian and pointed them out.

"Oh, locals, I imagine. They're not very big on skating here in Norway."

"Why not?" Randi couldn't imagine anyone not being enthralled by the grace and artistry of ice skating.

"You've heard of Sonja Henie?"

"Yeah, didn't she do a bunch of movies back in the '40s — big Busby Berkeley numbers on skates?"

Ian nodded. "She was from Norway, three-time Olympic champion. Some say she really made the sport. But the Norwegians don't remember her very fondly."

"Why not?"

Ian raised an eyebrow. "Is there an echo in here?" She stuck her tongue out at him, so he continued, "Henie skipped out on Norway to make her fortune in Hollywood. And in Hollywood the fortune stayed. When the Norwegians asked her to help provide money for the resistance against the Nazis, she thumbed her pretty little nose at them. She let her countrymen down, and they've never forgiven her."

"Is that why there aren't any Norwegian skaters?"

Ian nodded. "One of the reasons. If you bothered to pay attention when I do my commentary, you'd know that skating is considered a rich man's sport here in Norway. And until oil was found

in the North Sea, Norway was anything but a rich country."

She glanced over at the men, who had settled back in their seats with smug expressions, pointing at the skaters and laughing. "So you think they're hecklers. Poking fun at the Norwegian most-hated-sport."

Ian nodded again. "Got it in one. Harmless, if irritating."

"Hmmm."

The men's technical program was over, and Randi was spitting mad. Boitano had put in a poor show, as had Petrenko. Three upstarts, Alexei Urmanov and his sleeves, Elvis Stojko and his grin, and Phillipe Candellero and his Godfatheresque-grimace were in the top three positions. And again she'd seen those two men hanging around the rink, and once or twice, she'd noticed one of them by the "kiss-and-cry" area just before a performance, coincidentally Petrenko's. Ian wasn't willing to pay attention to her ideas, but she was becoming certain that those men had something sinister on their minds.

After sitting through practice runs for the ice dancing compulsories, Randi begged off on the event. That stupid tune had already embedded itself in her head, and she wasn't about to have it surgically attached by an evening of it. Ian was clearly disappointed, but nothing was going to keep him away from watching the great heroes of Great Britain, Jayne Torvill and Christopher Dean. By the time he got back that night, he was grumpy and out of sorts; Torvill and Dean had placed third in the compulsories, and Randi had her suspicions why.

The night of the men's long program, she became convinced. She'd picked up binoculars in one of the shops, and scanned the crowd for the little men. She found one of them at the far end of the rink, just behind some of the news media; Carl nearly tripped over him while setting up his minicam on a tripod. The other one she spotted near the judges. Now that she knew where they were, she kept her eyes on them, and was watching them carefully when Brian Boitano began his long program.

Aha! There, she saw it this time. As Boitano skated past the man at the end of the rink, the man's hands moved in a strange pattern, and she'd swear she'd seen some sort of glow around his tiny hands. Immediately after, Boitano choked, making his first major mistake of the program. She turned the binoculars on the odd man by the judges, and was startled to see the grim expressions on the judges' faces. The little man was walking up and down behind them, ticking a count off on his fingers. She wasn't surprised at the marks Boitano brought in, and she was convinced that the two weird men had something to do with it.

"DWhen Petrenko skated, she felt she had proof. Now all she had to do was convince Ian.
on't be ridiculous, Randi," Ian snapped as they entered their suite. Carl was nowhere to be found, probably out enjoying the local nightlife with as many of the local female population as would tolerate him.

"C'mon, Ian, I know what I'm talking about. You know that ever since I got this ... curse ... I've been sensitive to things like this."

"You're just looking for some arcane reason for why your favorite skater failed to make the grade in the Olympics. Can't you accept that he just isn't as good as these younger kids?"

"Boitano is one of the best skaters in the world. He fumbled on moves he makes every night in exhibition. And he's not that old — he's only 30."

"He has a blown knee."

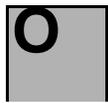
"You have a blown ego."

"You're sleeping on the couch."

"It's your turn."

He looked at her and shook his head, then walked over to her and put his hands on her shoulders. "Randi, you're seeing ghoulies and goblins where there aren't any. I'm sorry about the competition, but there wasn't anything magical about the loss. Boitano just couldn't do the jumps like the younger men."

"A lot you know," Randi grumbled.



On the night of the ice dancing technical program, Randi deemed it safe to go into the arena; the ice dancers were all required to skate to a rumba, but each pair had the right to select their own music. She didn't think anyone would choose anything as insipid as the compulsory music, so she settled into her seat expectantly, binoculars grasped in one hand. Carl had already taken his place down near the ice with his camera. As the first pair glided onto the ice, she scanned the crowd anxiously, but could find no indication of the odd duo.

Surprisingly, they never showed up, and the ice dancing technical programs went off pretty well, Torvill and Dean placing first. They were at the head of the pack by a narrow margin, but they were headed toward gold.



Ian fitted his cufflinks and arranged his starched cuffs carefully. Then he looked at his reflection in the mirror, smoothing back his brown hair and smiling at himself. He plucked at his bow tie and straightened the lapels of his tuxedo jacket.

Lounging on the suite's sofa, Randi blew a raspberry. "Aren't you taking this a bit far? It's an ice skating competition. The arena is going to be cold, Ian." She sat up and snared a leg warmer, tugging it on.

"Ice skating at its best is elegant, magical. And tonight, my love, it will be at its best. Torvill and Dean are back." He turned to her and grabbed her, lifting her to her feet and dancing around the room with her. She laughed, and he beamed at her. "What you are about to experience, Randi, is sublime perfection. A celebration of beauty." His lips hovered over hers and she lifted her face to his, but he swept her into another spin and then dropped her on the couch. "You should be dressed for the occasion."

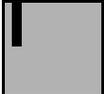
"I am dressed for the occasion. See? Down parka, leg warmers and warm boots. I'm not going in there in an evening gown, and that's that, Ian." She looked at him critically. "At least wear a scarf."

He grinned at her and snapped up a white silk scarf, which he wound around his neck with panache. "Better?"

"You're insane. And I won't have any sympathy for you when you catch cold."

"You're a philistine, Randi."

"I'm a warm philistine, Ian."

 an leaned forward in his seat, shivering, but the rapt expression on his face as he watched Torvill and Dean make magic on the ice told Randi that he didn't really feel the cold. There was no doubt about it — Torvill and Dean still had what it took to turn ice into gold. Their program was brilliant, perfect in every detail as they moved across the ice in time to the music Christopher Dean had commissioned and conducted himself. The audience was spellbound, breaths drawn sharply at each magnificent step and stunning lift and spin. Deep in her bones, Randi was sure that she was watching the gold medal in the making.

Lifting her binoculars to her eyes, she scanned the crowd again, certain that this time, the men would be absent again. But no! There they were — one at the end of the rink again, the other behind the judges. The judges were shaking their heads as Jayne Torvill lifted Christopher Dean from the ice. The crowd went wild, but the judges looked grim. The little man who danced and skipped behind them grinned, and Randi found herself growing angry. They couldn't ...

The final move, and Jayne Torvill came flipping over Christopher Dean's head. They hugged ecstatically, sure they had won the competition.

Moments later, as the technical scores were displayed, Randi watched Ian wilt, his face aghast. "Why ... that's impossible! That was a perfect program — those scores are an insult!"

"Wait. The presentation scores are coming up now."

The audience was obviously upset; the scores didn't seem to match the performance they had just seen by any stretch of the imagination. Randi picked up her binoculars again, and looked directly at the judges' area. The little man was rubbing his hands together gleefully, and Randi nudged Ian in the ribs, shoving the glasses at him. "Look at that."

Ian looked for a long time, his face growing serious. "Randi, I think you might have something here. You say you've seen them before ...?" he asked, handing the binoculars back to her.

"Just about every time the pros have skated since the men's practice sessions."

"Right." With that, Ian gathered up his hat and coat, got up, and pardoned his way to the end of the row. Randi did a double-take, then grabbed her own stuff and followed.

"Where the hell are you going, Ian?" she whispered at him as he stormed down toward the ice.

"To have a word or two with those men — I think you're right, Randi. There's something odd about them. No one in their right mind would give Torvill and Dean marks like that without some sort of ... diabolical ... influence!"

Randi rolled her eyes. It took the dethroning of Ian's fellow countrymen to get him to listen to her. And now, he was going to embarrass them both.

 he strange pair of men had disappeared by the time Ian and Randi reached the vicinity of the judges' area. Security would not let Ian and Randi through, which was puzzling in light of the fact that the strange man had been hanging around the judges and security quite frequently. Randi brought the binoculars up to her eyes and scanned the arena. "Spotted him!" she told Ian, and grabbed his arm and ran.

The two men had met up near the exit, and were moving quickly toward the door. Randi shrugged on her parka as she ran, and Ian struggled into his coat, slamming his hat down on his head as he followed. Within moments, they were outside the Northern Lights Hall, in sight of the great ice sculpture of a female ice skater. In the bright lights outside the arena, they caught a glimpse of the men as they slipped up the street toward an intersection.

"Come on!"

As the two men scurried in and out of the warren of streets that was Hamar, Ian had begun to wish they'd had time to collect the car. His feet were blocks of ice and he was shivering with the cold under his coat. Randi seemed quite comfortable in her inelegant but warm winter clothing. They were still shadowing the men, and shortly reached the edge of town. Suddenly, the men struck off toward the mountains, and Ian cursed softly. His shoes, which had earlier seemed so perfect for an evening of ice dancing, were filling rapidly with snow, and it would be luck alone that saved him from frostbite.

Randi had to just about drag Ian up the slope as his limbs became more inoperative from the cold. Once, she had stopped, asking if he wanted to turn back. He'd shaken his head, urging her on, but now he was beginning to regret the decision.

They were getting further and further away from the lights of the town, and now the snow was illuminated only by starlight and the reflected sheen of the gibbous moon. Suddenly, one of the men disappeared, seeming to drop into the snow. Randi and Ian stopped, looking frantically for the other man. Then they spotted him, slogging his way up another ridge of snow.

"After him!" Ian ordered, panting with the effort to keep his chilled limbs moving.

Not far from where they'd lost the other man, they saw the second man zig-zagging down the leeside of the slope toward a cave. Ian sent up a silent prayer that it was one of those wonderful places heated by underground springs, but he held out little hope. Grimly, he and Randi trudged on. They caught sight of the man slipping into the cave, and poured on more speed.

Within a few minutes, they were at the mouth of the cave, and Ian sighed. A blast of warmer air met them at the cave opening, as well as a mellow golden glow. Water trickled from melting ice as they stepped into the cavern, making a gentle plop-plop sound on the stone floor. Ian paused to shake snow out of his ruined shoes, then nodded for them to go on.

The sound of soft footsteps drew them further into the cave, and they followed the winding path further into the mountain. At last, they came out into a larger cavern, lit by gently flickering torches. At the far end of the vaulted room, a woman stood, resplendent in glittering white, blue and silver. At her side stood the two strange little men. Somehow, the man who had disappeared into the snow had found his way into this strange, ice-rimed place.

As they came closer, Ian was struck by the incredible, unearthly beauty of the woman. Her hair was so blonde it was white, piled high upon her head and cascading down the side in ringlets. A glittering diadem perched among the curls, a perfect blue diamond in its center. Her gown was archaic, medieval, pale blue with billowing silver oversleeves, edged in crisp white lace. Her eyes were a brilliant aquamarine blue, and her skin shimmered as if it was frosted with crystal. She stood still as a statue, her face unreadable as they approached.

"Who intrudes?" she demanded in an accented voice, clear and cold.

"I — " Ian began, nonplussed, and stopped.

"I'm Randi Wallace and this is Ian Matheson. And we want to know why you've been interfering with the Olympics," Randi blurted out aggressively, standing next to Ian.

A perfect white-blond eyebrow arched at the impudence of the demand. "Indeed," she said, her voice carrying easily across the distance. "Come closer."

Glancing at each other, Ian and Randi walked across the expanse to come within a few feet of the woman and her weird companions.

Glittering eyes swept over them as the two small men eyed them with open curiosity. They were even smaller than they'd appeared at a distance, more like midgets, but perfect in their proportions.

"You're not like the others. Most of the surface dwellers cannot see my friends here," she told them, gesturing toward the men. "You have the smell of magic."

It was Randi's turn to arch an eyebrow. "Who are you?" she asked.

A small, chilly smile touched the woman's lips. "Can you not guess?"

It was Ian who spoke. "The Snow Queen."

She inclined her head gracefully. "Why do you invade my domain? Why do you follow my vetter?"

"Vetter?" Ian repeated. "The Norwegian earth spirits? I thought they were simply legend."

"The Norwegian people know that is not true. You are familiar with magic — why do you doubt?"

"We're not Norwegian. And we're here to find out why you've been interfering with the Olympics," Randi replied angrily.

"Yes — why?" Ian echoed.

"Why do you care?"

Ian's mouth worked soundlessly at the question. "Why? Well ... it's unolympic, that's why. Athletes who should have done well have been marked down for ridiculous reasons, while others who haven't skated half as well have received medals! It's an atrocity!"

"It was necessary," the Snow Queen replied calmly.

"Why?" Randi demanded.

She stared at them for a long moment, then nodded to herself. At last, she answered, "Norway has not hosted the Games for many years. Nor has Norway provided athletes for the figure skating competitions for a long time. There is a reason for that."

"Sonja Henie," Ian guessed.

"Correct. The Henie betrayed Norway, turned her back on the country that gave her life, that fueled her aspirations. She befriended the Evil One, the Fuhrer. In Norway's hour of need, she turned away, preferring the wealth her success had given her to the safety of her mother land."

"But why interfere with these skaters — they had nothing to do with Sonja Henie!"

"They have had their moment. They have taken their success and used it to amass wealth. Now they come back to take it away from others. It will not happen in my land."

"That's ridiculous! The Olympic Committee accepted the return of the professionals — the quality of the performances was higher because of the competition — they each had to re-qualify for their amateur credentials — they've all worked very hard for the privilege—"

"Not in my land. What happens beyond the borders of Norway is not my concern. But here, on Norwegian soil, they will not prevail."

"Boitano and Petrenko —" Randi started.

"My vetter simply planted doubt in their minds, a sense of failure. Their own insecurities did the rest."

"So how do you explain Gordeeva and Grinkov? They went pro and came back to win the gold —"

"The baby, Daria. Mitigating circumstances," she replied apologetically.

"And Mishkutenok and Dmitriev?" Ian challenged.

The Snow Queen glared at her pair of vetter. "An administrative error, I fear," she snapped, and the vetter took a nervous step backward. "The other Russian pair, Shishkova and Naumov, were meant to win the silver."

"But *Torvill and Dean* —" wailed Ian.

Pain flickered over the Snow Queen's face. "I admit that was difficult. It broke my heart, to tell you the truth. They were truly golden. There was nothing that could be done to their program — they were too confident, too familiar with each other. Only the judges could be influenced. But it had to be done."

"The pros will be accepted eventually, you know. You haven't really won anything," Randi told her hotly.

"Perhaps you are right. Eventually the sport will not distinguish between professional or amateur. But not in Norway. Not at these Games."

"You realize what you've done, don't you?" Ian demanded.

"Done? I have prevented a repeat of the terrible evil that gripped the Henie so many years ago. I have preserved the innocence of the Olympics competed in Norwegian territory."

"You've doomed ice dancing to rock and rollers for the next four years is what you've done!" Ian bellowed. "You rewarded sequins and cleavage over elegance and beauty!"

A look of horror slowly spread over the Snow Queen's face as she absorbed the full impact of Ian's words.



he Snow Queen provided her own coach to return Ian and Randi to the outskirts of Hamar, and the vetter, silent and solemn, escorted them to the nearly abandoned car park and their car. There was no sign of their cameraman, Carl; presumably he'd found some gullible female to give him a lift back to Lillehammer.

When they'd left her, the Snow Queen had been distraught over Ian's announcement, and swore that never again would vetter interfere with Olympic competition. It did little for the 1994 Olympics, but at least future competitions were safe from magical intervention, from vetter at any rate.

As Ian fumbled with the car keys, one of the vetter finally spoke. "She had the best interests of Norway at heart, you know. This country has long been bitter over the Henie's refusal to help

during the War. The land which nurtured her was beneath her — she was an 'Ah-meri-can,' not a Norwegian, and Norwegian freedom meant nothing to her. It cut to the heart of the country. All our lady was trying to do was set the scales right again."

Ian looked at the small man sympathetically. "I know she had the interests of your country at heart. But no one else will, so the effort was all but wasted. She may even have accelerated the acceptance of the professionals back into the Olympics — they posed so little threat to the amateurs so far, the IOC may not concern themselves with banning them in future at all."

The vetter nodded grimly. "It may be as you say. But here in Norway, it was the amateurs who won."

"Except for the baby's parents," Ian agreed.

"And the administrative error," Randi reminded.

The vetter's companion blushed furiously, plucking at his companion's jacket.

"And you're not planning anything for the women, right, boys?" Ian demanded, wagging a finger at them.

"Our lady promised," answered the vocal vetter. "Besides, the only returning professional is Katerina Witt, and she claims she skates not for medals but for peace. Even if she has enjoyed a lifestyle not unlike the Henie's in some ways," he added disapprovingly. He turned to his companion, who was practically jumping up and down with impatience. "We go now," he said. "Fare well." Then the two vetter scurried off as fast as their short legs would carry them.

"So, what do we do, hmm?" Randi asked as they got into the car.

"Do? What can we do?" Ian replied as he gunned the motor. The car was frigid and would take a few minutes to heat up.

"About the judging — Torvill and Dean were robbed of their gold! Boitano would have medalled — so would Petrenko!"

As the engine kicked over and hummed steadily, Ian turned to look at Randi. "Who's going to believe that the skaters and judges were influenced by vetter under orders from the Snow Queen? I mean, really, Randi!"

Sullenly, Randi scrunched down in her seat, silent for long minutes while the engine heated up. "At least they won't be doing anything about the women's competition," she mumbled.

"Hmm. Good thing, too — that one's got enough troubles of its own without supernatural help."

"Ian — you don't think —" Randi asked, sitting up quickly.

"Randi, don't even think it —"

"But what if —"

"Randi!"

Ian released the emergency brake and slowly edged the car out of its slot, pointing it toward Lillehammer and their hotel.

"It could happen," Randi muttered darkly.

What do *you* think?

Factoids — *She-Wolf of London*

Professor Ian Matheson was born on February 20, 1955. In "Can't Keep a Dead Man Down," he died on November 19, 1990. He has a twin brother who is currently serving time in a Baltimore prison. He is a graduate of Oxford, and although he started to study law, he holds a doctorate in Mythology. He has published several books, including *The Face of Fear* and *Satan's Sex Slaves*, and penned two screenplays, *Ian Stryker, Professor of Danger*, based on the book of the same name, and *Beyond the Beyond: The Amoeba Moleman of Lair Nebula 9*. Neither screenplay has ever been filmed