
[Start Reading](#)

[Book Club Notes](#)

[About this Book](#)

[About the Author](#)

[Reviews](#)

[About No Greater Love](#)

[Table of Contents](#)

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What Have I Done? is dedicated to every woman who lives under the cloud of control. You will find happiness when you find the courage to set yourself free...

I will gather up all the little pieces that you have chipped away, hidden in drawers, swept What

Have I Done? (No Greater Love series Book 2) under the carpet and shoved behind cushions and I will rebuild myself. I will become all of the things that I thought I might. All the dreams I considered before you broke me, I will chase them all.

Ten years ago

Kathryn Brooker watched the life slip from him, convinced she saw the black spirit snake out of his body and disappear immediately through the floor, spiralling down and down. She sat back in her chair and breathed deeply. She had expected euphoria or at the very least relief. What she couldn't have predicted was the numbness that now enveloped her. Picturing her children sleeping next door, What Have I Done? (No Greater Love series Book 2) she closed her eyes What Have I Done? (No Greater Love series Book 2) and wished for them a deep and peaceful What Have I Done? (No Greater Love series Book 2) rest, knowing it would be the last they would enjoy for some time. As ever, consideration of what was best for her son and daughter was only a thought away.

The room felt quite empty despite the blood-soaked body lying centrally on the bed. The atmosphere was peaceful, the temperature just right.

Kathryn registered the smallest flicker of disappointment; she had expected to feel more.

Having changed into jeans and a jersey, she calmly stood by the side of the bed on which her husband's pale corpse lay. With great deliberation and for the first time in her life, she dialled 999. It felt surreal to put into What Have I Done? (No Greater Love series Book 2) practice the one act that she had mentally rehearsed for as long as she could remember, although in her imagination the emergency had always been a child with a broken leg or a fire in a neighbouring empty building, nothing too dramatic.

'Emergency, which service do you require?'

‘Oh, hello, yes, I’m not too sure which service I require.’

‘You are not sure?’

‘I think probably the police or ambulance, maybe both. Sorry. As I said, I’m not too sure...’

‘Can I ask you what it is in connection with, madam?’

‘Oh, right, yes, of course. I have just murdered my husband.’

‘I’m sorry, you have what? This is a terrible line.’

‘Oh, I know. I’m sorry, I’ll try and speak up a bit. It’s always a terrible connection from here, even if I’m phoning someone locally. It’s because I am up in the main bedroom and the reception is very bad. My son thinks it may be because of all the big trees around us; we did cut them right back one year, but I can’t remember if it made any difference. Plus we get interference from the computers in the next building; we’ve been meaning to get it looked at, but that’s by the by. Right, yes. I said, I What Have I Done? (No Greater Love series Book 2) have murdered my husband.’

* * *

Kathryn blinked at the humming strip light that winked overhead; the bulb needed to be replaced. It was a distraction that could easily become annoying.

‘Did you do it?’

Roland Gearing rested his weight on splayed fingers, his hands forming little pyramids that, incredibly, supported his muscular frame as he leant over the table. He lowered his voice an octave; this was the one question he knew he had to ask and yet he was fearful What Have I Done? (No Greater Love series Book 2) of her response.

‘Did What Have I Done? (No Greater Love series Book 2) I do it?’

‘Yes, Kathryn, did you?’

He held her gaze, hoping to instil trust, trying to tease out the honest answer. He knew a lot about lying and relied on his gut instinct. Years on the job had taught him to monitor the interviewee’s pupils carefully.

‘It’s a question that I wouldn’t normally ask quite so early in proceedings, but as your friend – as Mark’s friend too – I feel I have to. Is that okay?’

‘Yes, yes of course. I understand.’

She gave a fleeting smile as her index finger and thumb looped her hair behind her left ear and then her right.

Her calm composure rattled him; *What Have I Done? (No Greater Love series Book 2)* there was none of the hysteria or fear that usually characterised these encounters. Women in similar situations were often almost insane *What Have I Done? (No Greater Love series Book 2)* with terror, rage or the dread of injustice. Kathryn, however, appeared placid.

She remembered her husband’s glassy eyes. The way his fingers slipped and missed as they struggled with an invisible tourniquet that stopped the breath in his throat. Her nose wrinkled; her nostrils still carried the faintest trace of the iron stench of Mark’s seeping blood. It had repulsed and comforted her in equal measure. It was as if she could taste it at the back of her throat. She hadn’t sought to ease his discomfort in his dying moments, nor had she offered any words of solace. She had in fact smiled, as though he would manage, was still the strong, capable man who could cut wood, paint walls and raise a hand.

She may have even hummed, as though she wasn’t hovering, desperate to witness the demise that would mean the end of *What Have I Done? (No Greater Love series Book 2)* the whole sordid chapter. When she had spoken, her tone had been nonchalant.

‘Take your time. I’ve got hours, nowhere to go and a whole lifetime ahead of me. A promise is a promise.’

Her flippant pragmatism hid a heart that groaned with relief.

‘I haven’t got long.’

His voice had been a waning whisper. His final words coasted on fragmented last breaths.

‘Too slow, painful. You’ll pay.’

She mentally erased the words before he had finished. She would not share, recount or remember them.

‘Oh, Mark, I have already paid.’

What Have I Done? (No Greater Love series Book 2)

Bending low, with her face inches from *What Have I Done? (No Greater Love series Book 2)* his, she breathed the fetid air that he exhaled, sharing the small space where life lingered until the very end. Kathryn marvelled at the capacity for human animals to cling to the ‘now’. It was quite impressive, fascinating even, despite the obvious futility.

‘Yes. Yes, I did it, What Have I Done? (No Greater Love series Book 2) Roland. It was me. Me alone.’

There was a hint of pride in her admission, as if she were commenting on an achievement. Roland found it most disconcerting. He shook his head. Disbelief clouded everything, even after having seen and heard her confession. He looked at the neat, middle-aged woman with the pretty face sitting What Have I Done? (No Greater Love series Book 2) opposite him. The same woman who had handed him canapés on doily-decorated platters, served him percolated coffee and proffered homemade cake. The facts would simply not compute. She had been married to Mark Brooker, a man that he liked and admired. A man he had What Have I Done? (No Greater Love series Book 2) trusted with the education of his only daughter.

Roland exhaled slowly and scratched his chin where his stubble was at its most irritating. The hot, stress-filled environment of the interview room did nothing to help his sensitive skin. He wanted to go home and shower. Better still, he wanted to rewind the day and not pick up the 3 a.m. call that would disturb his family’s rest and destroy the community as he knew it.

Kathryn sensed his irritation, knowing he was the sort of man What Have I Done? (No Greater Love series Book 2) who cherished his sleep. She pictured him at home earlier that evening, enjoying sea bream with steamed vegetables and a chilled white, after having spent an hour in the gym, maintaining that flat stomach. Neither could have guessed that his Sabbath would have ended like this, with him facing her across the table inside Finchbury police station at this ungodly hour, trying to figure out what the hell was going on.

‘Are you sure you want to talk to me?’ he prompted.

His jacket fell open, revealing the hot-pink silk lining of his handmade suit. She imagined his fellow police officers taking the mick, but knew enough about Roland and the care he took with his appearance to realise that he wouldn’t pay them any heed. He would never be seen in the cheap, crumpled brands that some of his contemporaries wore. Kathryn recalled a What Have I Done? (No Greater Love series Book 2) conversation she had overheard between him and Mark in which he’d lamented the loss What Have I Done? (No Greater Love series Book 2) of his uniform, an inevitable consequence of climbing the ranks and becoming chief inspector. He had taken such pleasure in polishing buttons, shining boots and removing specks of lint from the wool of his tunic. She watched as he ran his palm over his abs, clearly enjoying the feel of himself against the inside of a crisp, white shirt.

‘Yes.’

‘You are absolutely certain that this wouldn’t be easier with a stranger?’

She noted What Have I Done? (No Greater Love series Book 2) the flash of wide-eyed hope.

'I am positive, Roland. Thank you for asking, but there is no one else that I would rather talk to and I appreciate you coming and giving up your What Have I Done? (No Greater Love series Book 2) sleep, I really do.'

It was as if she didn't get it, as if she had invited him over, rather than the fact he had been hauled from his bed in the early hours in response to the first suspected murder on his patch in eighteen years. There was no quaver to her voice, no hesitation or apparent nervousness. Her hands sat neatly folded together in her lap. She looked as calm as someone waiting for a doctor's appointment.

Roland had been a police officer for twenty years. He had seen things – gruesome, unjust and amusing things. But this? It made no sense; it was shocking. It had stunned him, shaken him.

'You seem very calm, considering your current situation.'

He wondered if she was in shock.

'Do you know, it's funny that you should say that, because I do feel calm. I feel very calm.'

'That worries me greatly.'

'Oh, Roland, there's no need to worry, no need at all. It makes a pleasant change for me, this feeling of serenity. I had almost forgotten what it was like! In fact I don't think I have felt like this since I was a child. That was a lovely time in my life, when I had absolutely nothing to worry about and What Have I Done? (No Greater Love series Book 2) I was very much loved. I had a wonderful childhood, a wonderful life. I wasn't always this way, you know.'

What Have I Done? (No Greater Love series Book 2)

'What way?'

'Oh, you know... afraid, edgy, contained. I was quite determined. Never racy or wild, but I had a quiet belief that I could set the world alight, blaze trails. What Have I Done? (No Greater Love series Book 2) I thought I would achieve so many things. My parents always told me that the only limit to my achievements was my imagination and I believed them. They are both gone now, and I don't think about them too much.'

'Why not?'

She exhaled deeply.

'To tell you the truth, Roland, I have always thought that the dead might watch over us in some way, even have the capacity to What Have I Done? (No Greater Love series Book 2) protect us. If my parents have been watching over me, then I am ashamed for all that they have had to witness, mortified by what I have become. On the other hand, if they were able to protect me from their viewing gallery on high, why didn't they? I've lost count of the number of times What Have I Done? (No Greater Love series Book 2) I've asked for help, prayed for help, all to no avail. So I tend not to bother. It's far too confusing and that's one thing that I haven't needed

any more of – confusion.’

‘If you did it, Kathryn, then it begs the question, why? Why did you do it?’

What Have I Done What Have I Done? (No Greater Love series Book 2) No Greater Love Series Book 2

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