

Sister Love
and Other Crime Stories

JOHN ESCOTT

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SISTER LOVE and Other Crime Stories

Marcia lives with her father and her sister, Karin. She does not have a job. Her father is ill and needs someone with him all the time. So Marcia stays at home. It is not an easy life, and Karin does not help. Is it a crime to hate your sister?

Joey does not have a sister, and he does not have a job. So how does he live, where does he get his money from? From crime. Small crimes at first, but they get bigger, and bigger. Joey doesn't call it crime, he calls it luck – Joey's luck. But everybody knows that luck does not last for ever . . .

Rosa has a job, but she does not make much money. So on Monday evenings she does something different – she asks people for 'hush money'. In other words, she sells her silence. But silence about what? And who is worse, the person who sells the silence, or the person who buys the silence?

Three different crimes, three different criminals . . .



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Sister Love



Marcia met Howard Collins at church. Marcia was thirty-five years old, Howard was forty-one. Howard lived with his mother in a small house on the south side of the town. Marcia lived with her sister and father in an apartment, three streets away.

Marcia did not work. Her father, George Grant, was ill and never left the apartment. He stayed in bed most of the time and always needed somebody with him. So Marcia stayed at home with her father, and only went out when her sister Karin was in the house.

The two sisters were very different. Marcia was short with a small round face and short black hair. Karin was ten years younger. She was tall, had long brown hair, and good legs, and a suntan all through the summer. People often said to Marcia, 'Your sister is very beautiful.' There were always lots of men ready to take Karin out to dinner or to the cinema. But Marcia stayed at home.

Karin worked in a shop in the town. When she was at home, she liked to sit up on the roof garden of their apartment building.

It was one Sunday in May when Marcia came home with Howard the first time. She took him to see her father. George Grant was in bed. He had grey hair and a grey face. Sometimes he read a book, but mostly he just sat in bed and watched television.

'This is Howard, father,' Marcia said. 'He works at the hospital, and we met at church. I told you about him last week. Do you remember?'

'No,' her father said. And he turned his face away, back to his television. He was not interested in new people or his daughters' friends.

Just then, Karin came into the room. She wore a white bikini and white shoes. She smiled at Howard.

'So you're Howard,' she said. 'My big sister has got a boyfriend at last!'

Howard's face went red and he looked down at his feet.

Karin laughed. 'Come on up to the roof garden and have some wine. The sun is wonderful this morning.'

'Oh, I . . . ' Howard began.

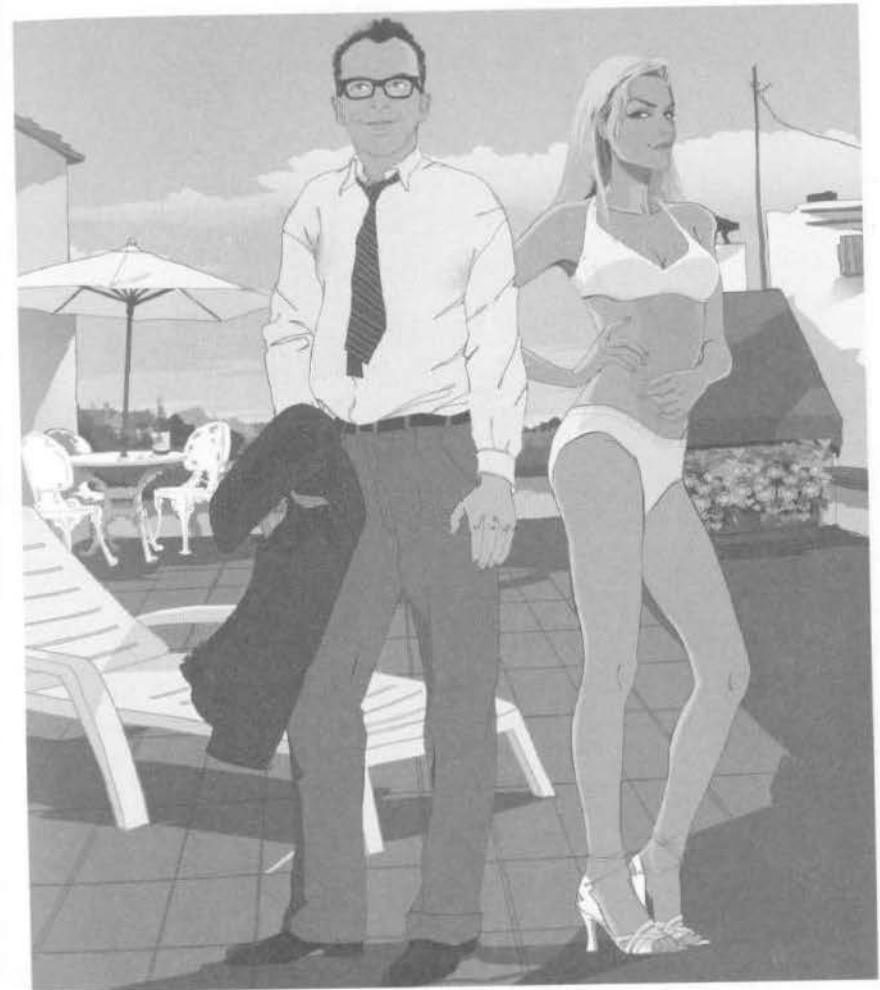
Marcia looked angrily at her sister. But then she said, 'Yes, I must get father a drink. See you in a minute, Howard. Go up to the roof and talk to Karin.'

The sun was hot on the roof and Howard took off his coat. He looked around. There were three chairs, a sun umbrella, a sunbed, and a table with three glasses and a

bottle of wine on it. There were tiles on the floor, and next to the little wall around the edge of the roof there were some flowers in boxes. This was the 'garden'.

'Very nice,' said Howard.

Karin smiled at him.



Howard looked around. 'Very nice,' he said.

'We don't see many good-looking men up here,' she said. 'Sit down and have a drink.'

Howard's face went red again. He gave a shy little laugh. 'Oh, er . . . thank you,' he said. He tried not to look at Karin's long suntanned legs, but it was not easy.

'I come up here all the time when it's sunny,' Karin said. She began to put suntan oil on her arms and legs.

Howard watched.

Then Marcia arrived, and the three of them sat in the sun and drank wine. Marcia looked at Howard with love in her eyes. She did not look at Karin.

Karin watched them. Her eyes went from her sister, to Howard, and back again to her sister. She smiled.

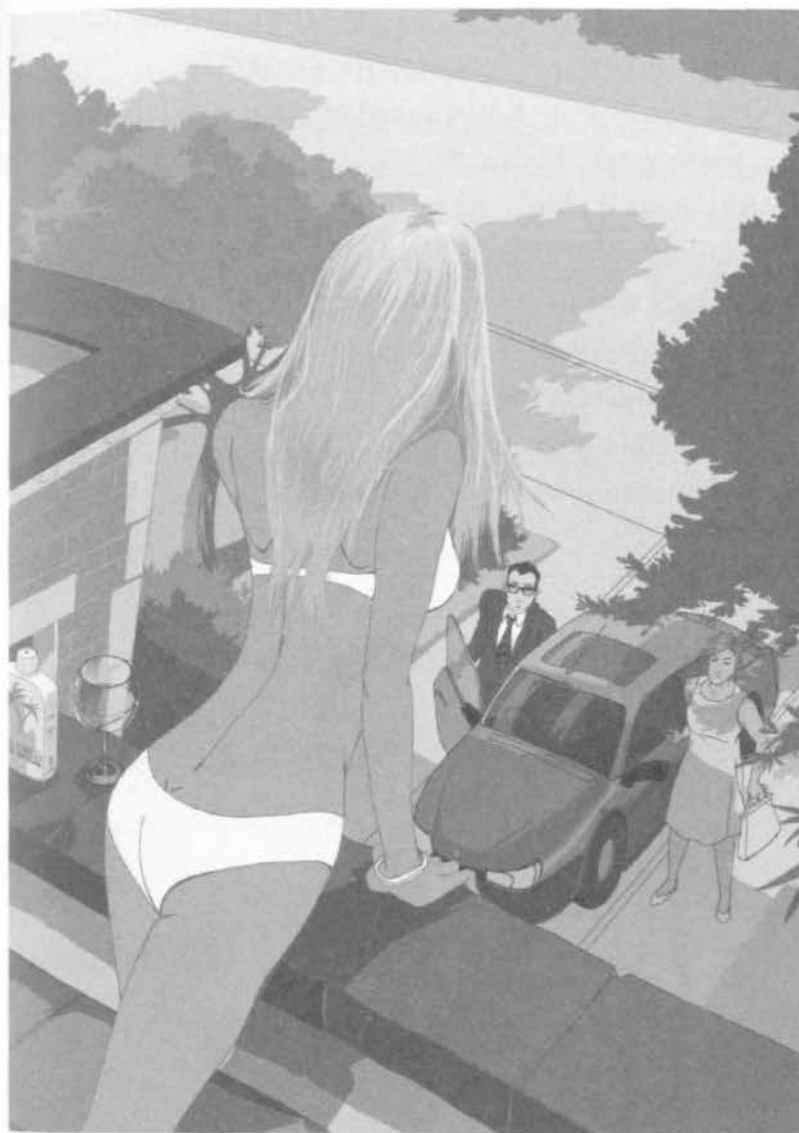
It was not a nice smile.



Every Sunday morning after that, Marcia brought Howard home for a glass of wine after church. Howard stopped his car in the street outside the apartment building, and Marcia said, 'Sound the horn, Howard. Tell Karin we're here, then she can get the wine ready.'

So Howard gave three little toots on his car horn. On sunny days Karin always came to the wall at the edge of the roof, and looked over to wave at them. Then she went to get the wine.

She always wore her bikini or a very short skirt. Marcia never wore short skirts or a bikini.



On sunny days Karin always came to the wall at the edge of the roof, and looked over to wave at them.

'My legs are too fat for bikinis,' she told Howard.

'Your legs are . . . very nice,' he said shyly.

One day in June Karin asked Howard, 'What time do you finish work, Howard?'

'About six o'clock,' he said.

'Could you bring me home after work?' Karin said. 'My shop's very near the hospital – you drive right past it. And you only live three streets away from us.'

'There's a very good bus,' said Marcia quickly. 'It stops outside our building.'

'But the bus is so slow!' Karin said. 'Please, Howard!'



'Please, Howard!' said Karin.

Howard looked from one sister to the other. 'Oh, well . . . er, yes, all right then,' he said.

'Thank you!' Karin said, and gave him a quick kiss.

So every evening Howard drove Karin home. On the first Friday they were an hour late. When they arrived, Marcia was at the door of the apartment building.

'What happened?' she asked. 'Why are you so late?'

'There was an accident,' Karin said. 'Three cars, all across the road – on that hill by the cinema, you know. We couldn't get past, we couldn't go back. There were so many cars! Nobody could move!'

Howard said nothing.



It was a long, hot summer that year. Marcia went to church every Sunday morning, and Karin stayed at home with their father. When it was sunny – and it often was – Karin went up to her sunbed on the roof.

When Marcia went up to the roof garden, she always sat under the umbrella. But Karin put on lots of suntan oil and sat in the sun in her bikini.

'The hot sun's not good for your body,' Marcia said.

Karin laughed. 'Howard likes my body.'

'No, he doesn't!' Marcia said angrily.

'Oh, he does!' Karin said. 'He's very shy with women, but he always looks at my body *very* carefully. He does it all the time. Perhaps he wants me to take off—'

'Stop it, Karin!' Marcia said. 'Don't say those things!'

Karin laughed. 'What's the matter, big sister? Are you afraid I'm going to take him from you?'

Marcia did not answer.



The next Sunday, Howard phoned Marcia early in the morning.

'I - I don't feel very well,' he said. 'I'm not going to church today.'

'My love, I'm sorry,' Marcia said. 'Can I phone you when I get home?'

'Yes, of course,' he said.

'I can't phone before one o'clock,' Marcia said. 'I'm going to be late back because there's a meeting after church. Something about Africa, I think.'

'Oh yes, I remember,' Howard said.

But Marcia was wrong. There was no meeting after church that morning. It was the next Sunday. So she left church at the usual time and arrived home at a quarter to twelve.

First she went in to see her father, but he was asleep. Then she phoned Howard, but there was no answer.

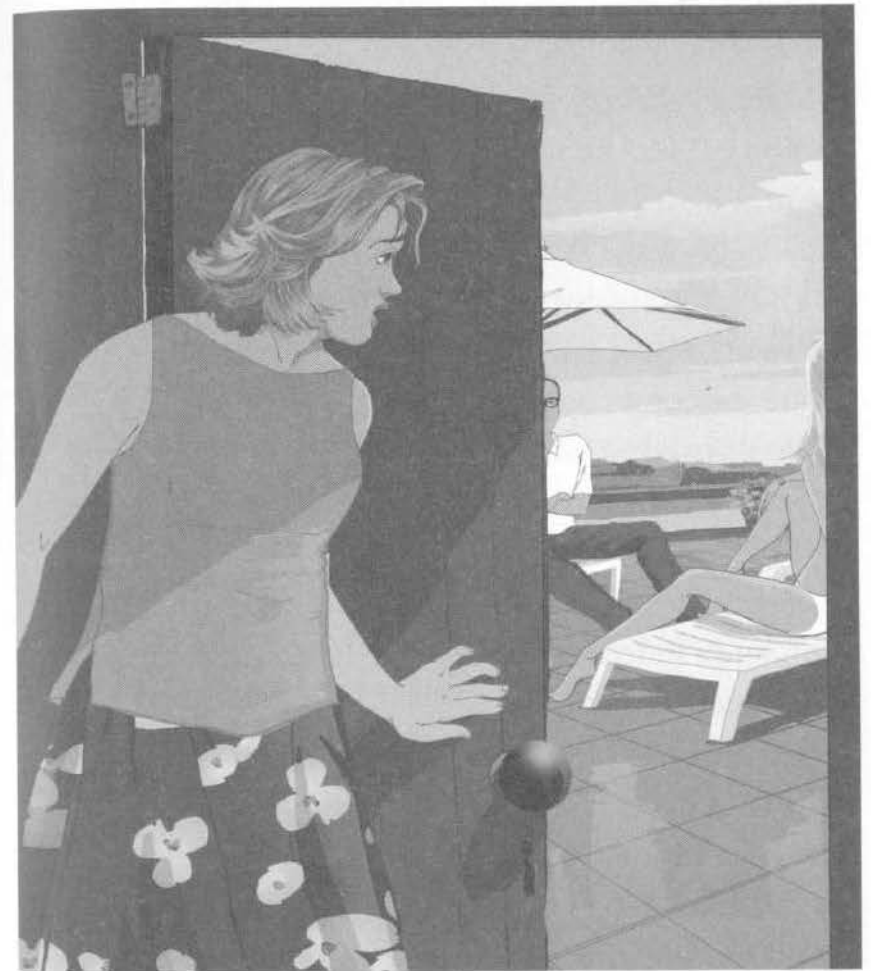
'Perhaps he's sleeping,' she thought. 'And his mother doesn't want to answer the phone.'

She went to her room and put on a long summer skirt. Then she went up to the roof garden.

She put her hand on the door to the roof . . . and stopped. The door was half open and she could hear voices. There was someone with Karin.

A man. Howard. *Howard?*

Marcia listened.



Marcia could hear voices.

'I feel bad about this,' Howard said. 'We must tell Marcia soon, Karin.'

'No!' Karin said quickly. She gave a little laugh. 'It's our secret, Howard. Only for a little longer. All right?'

'I - I don't like . . . ' he began.

'But you do love *me*, Howard,' Karin said. 'Not Marcia? Say you love me. Please!'

Marcia suddenly felt cold.

'You . . . you know I do,' Howard answered. 'But—'

Karin kissed him. 'It's our little secret. Oh, is your car outside, my love? We don't want Marcia to see it.'

'I didn't bring my car,' Howard said. 'I walked here.'

'Good,' Karin said. 'But it's getting late. You must go, before she comes home.'

They kissed again.

'See you tomorrow, usual time, usual place,' said Karin. 'Now, go!'

Marcia moved quickly and quietly away from the roof door, and ran to her bedroom. She did not want Howard or Karin to see her.

She heard their voices. Then the front door of the apartment opened and closed. Howard was gone.

Marcia sat on her bed for an hour. 'Why, why, *why*?' she thought. 'Why does she do it? I stay at home with an old man all the time. I can't go out to work, I can't make new friends, I can't meet new people. I go shopping once

a week and I go to church once a week. That's all. And then I met Howard. When he said "I love you", I was so happy. And now . . . ?'

Karin had everything. Good looks, a job, friends. She was young, she was beautiful, she could have any man. So why Howard? Why, why, *why*?

'It's not because she wants *him*,' Marcia thought. 'It's because *I* love him. It's because she doesn't want *me* to be happy.'

But you do love me, Howard. Not Marcia?

You know I do.

Was it true? Did Howard love Karin and not her? No! He saw only the beautiful, suntanned body. He didn't *know* her.

'She's not going to have him . . . ' Marcia thought.

✻ ✻ ✻

Every evening that week, Howard drove Karin home after work. And every evening they got later and later.

The next Sunday, Marcia didn't go to church.

'I've got a bad head,' she told Karin. 'I just phoned Howard and told him, and he's coming here after church as usual. I'm going back to sleep for an hour or two.' And she went into her bedroom and shut the door.

Later in the morning, when Karin was with their father, Marcia went up to the roof garden. Karin's bottle of suntan oil was on the table, and Marcia smiled.

When Karin came up to the roof, Marcia was in her chair under the umbrella with a book in her hand.

'Oh, is your head better?' Karin asked.

'Yes, thanks,' Marcia said.

Karin wore her bikini, a new yellow one. She opened her bottle of suntan oil.



Karin opened her bottle of suntan oil.

'Oh, there's not much here,' she said. 'I must get some more.' She began to put some oil on her legs.

Twenty minutes later, Howard stopped his car in the street below. Up on the roof, Karin and Marcia heard the usual three little toots on his car horn.

'He's here,' Karin said excitedly. 'Your man's here, big sister!' And she laughed.

Yes, Marcia thought. *My man, not yours, Karin.*

Karin jumped up from her sunbed. She ran to the wall at the edge of the roof to look down and wave to Howard. She had no shoes on, and at the wall her feet suddenly slipped away from under her.

'Aaagh!' she cried.

She fell forward, and put out her hands to grab the wall. But the top of the wall was slippery too. Her hands could not hold it, and slipped away, off the wall, over the edge. And her body went on too, over the edge of the wall, and down . . .

Down . . . down . . . down . . .

Before she hit the ground, she knew.

Slippery . . . suntan oil . . . Marcia . . .

Joey's Luck



Joey Kerrigan arrived in London in January 1912. He did not have a place to stay.

'It doesn't matter,' he thought, smiling. 'Joey's luck is going to find me a room.'

Joey thought a lot about luck. 'One day I'm going to be rich,' he told everybody. 'Lucky people get rich, and I'm lucky.'

After a lot of walking, he found a room in a house. It was near Tower Bridge. The room wasn't very big but it was cheap. The landlord's name was Mr Webber. He looked Joey up and down.

'What's your name?' he said. 'Where are you from?'

'Joe. Joe . . . Smith,' Joe said. 'I'm from Ireland.'

'Well, you can have the room,' Webber said, 'but I want two weeks' money now.'

'I've only got one week's money,' Joey said.

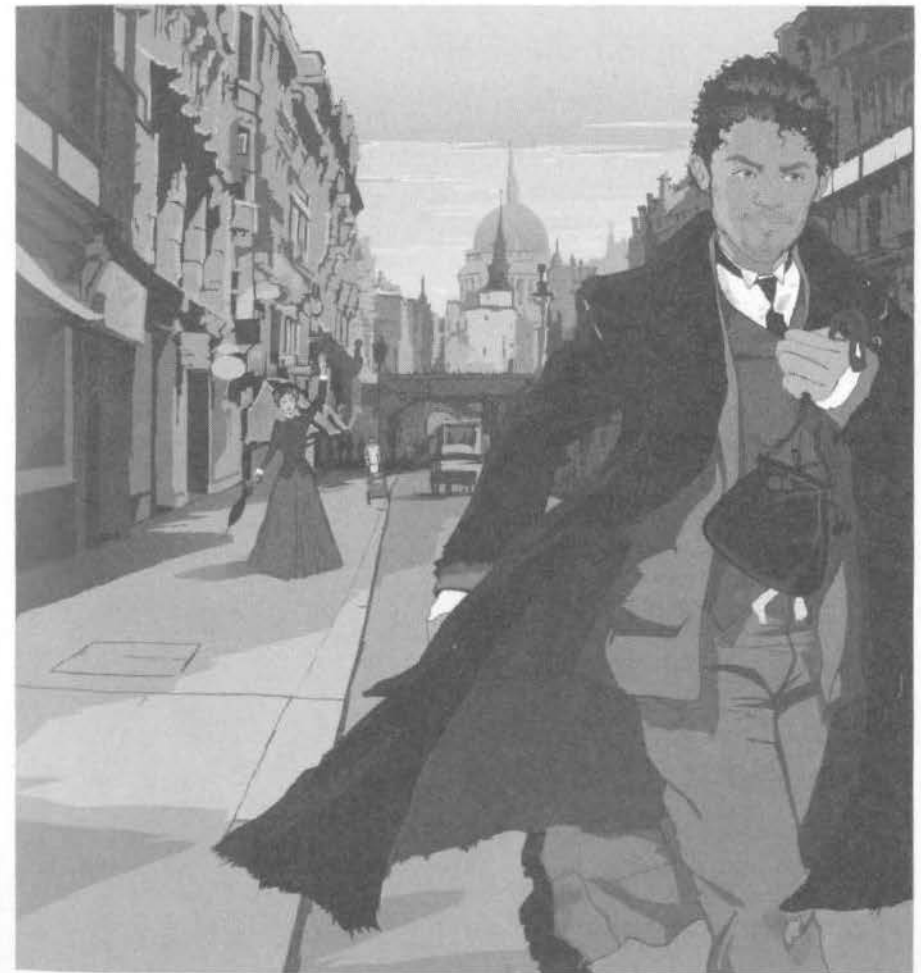
'And tomorrow's Sunday,' Webber said. 'You can't find work on a Sunday. So when can you give me the second week's money?'

Joey smiled with his mouth but not his eyes. 'I can find

work,' he said. 'I'm lucky. Good things happen to me. It's called Joey's luck.'



On Sunday Joey stayed in bed all morning and in the afternoon he went for a walk. After an hour, he took a bag from a woman in Fleet Street.



Joey took a bag from a woman in Fleet Street.

The woman shouted, 'Stop! Stop!'

But Joey was now fifty metres away, and there were no other people near.

Joey laughed and ran down a little street, then between two tall buildings down to the river.

He stopped and opened the bag. There was some money in it, but not very much. He took the money out, then put the bag into the river.

Later that day, he walked past a bookshop. There were lots of people there, looking at books, and Joey moved carefully between them. For a second he stood behind a fat man, then moved quietly away. The man did not feel Joey's hand in his back pocket, but the man's wallet was now inside Joey's shirt.



Joey was a very good pickpocket.

It was a big, fat wallet, and when he got back to the house, he gave the landlord the second week's money for the room.

'You found work on a Sunday?' Webber said. 'Where? Who with?'

Joey smiled. 'I told you, I'm lucky. Joey's luck!'



For the next three months, Joey Kerrigan walked the streets of London most days. He stole handbags from women, or things from shops, and he took wallets from men's pockets. One morning at the beginning of April, he took a wallet from the pocket of an old man with a red face. Joey was usually a very good pickpocket – people never knew anything about it.

But not that morning. The man with the red face was quick. He turned, saw Joey, and shouted.

'Hey! You! That's my wallet! Come back here!'

But Joey was a good runner too. In two seconds he was round the corner into another street, then round another corner, and then he jumped onto a bus.

'Joey's luck!' Joey said, laughing.



There was more luck for Joey that week.

He first learned about Theo Goldman's money in a pub near his landlord's house. Webber went to the pub most evenings and sat with his friend, Goldman.

Goldman had a shop not far from the pub. He bought and sold a lot of different things – tables, chairs, beds, clocks, watches, books, pictures . . .

When Joey went into the pub that evening, he saw Webber and Goldman at a table near the window. There were a lot of people in the pub. Joey bought a drink, then found a chair near Webber and Goldman. They did not see him. Joey sat with his back to them, and listened.

‘But I need money to buy things when people bring them in,’ Goldman said.

‘Some money, yes,’ Webber answered. ‘But a hundred pounds or more? And in the shop? No, no, Theo!’

‘It’s not in the shop,’ Goldman said. ‘It’s in my room at the back.’

‘Do you have a good place to put it?’ Webber said.

Goldman laughed. ‘A very good place,’ he said.

Joey sat with his drink, thinking. He knew Goldman’s shop because it was in the same street as Webber’s house. Joey often walked past it.

A hundred pounds or more. ‘I’m going to get that hundred pounds!’ he thought. ‘Then I can do anything! Perhaps begin a new life in America!’

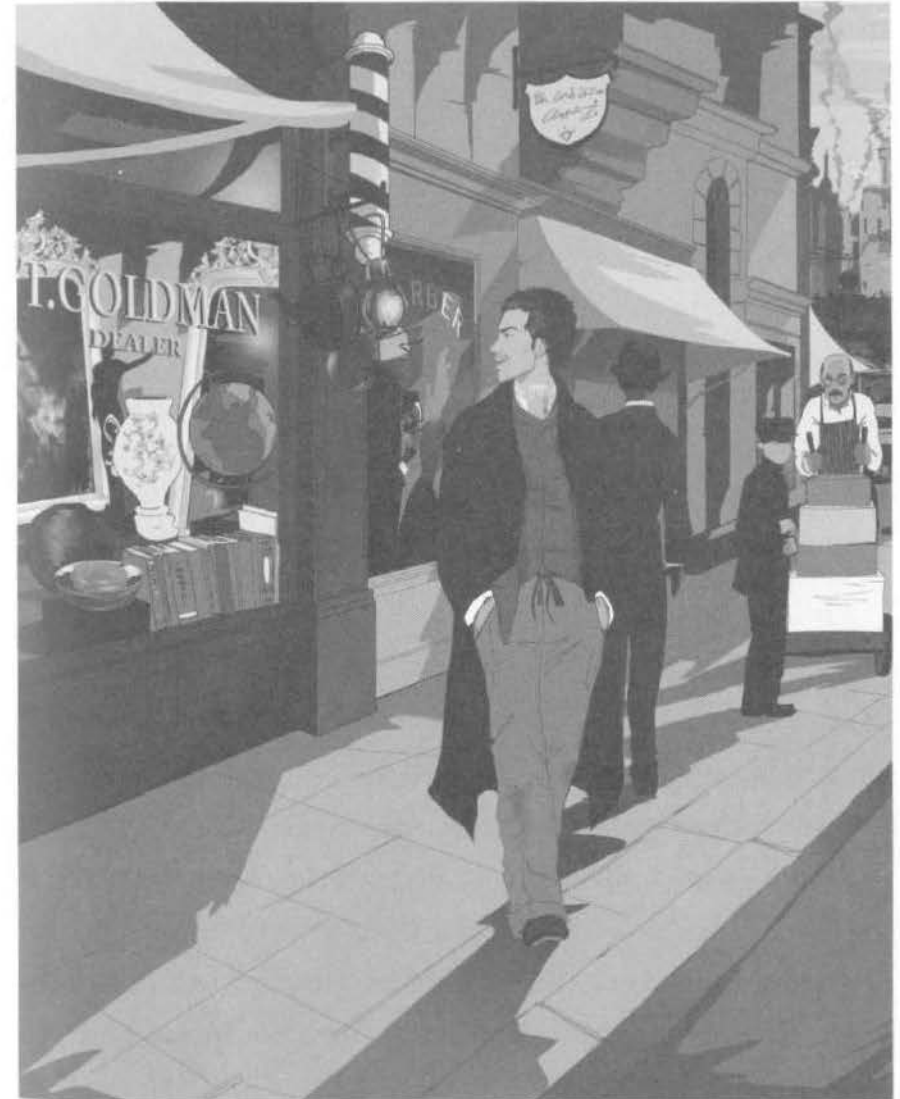
He smiled. Joey’s luck again!

So the money was in the room at the back, in *a very good place*. But where was that place?



The next morning Joey walked slowly past Goldman’s shop. He did not go in, but looked through the window.

The old man was in the shop, but he did not see Joey.



Joey did not go in, but looked through the window.

Joey saw an open door to the room at the back of the shop. Through the door he could see a table, two chairs, and a big cupboard. Was Goldman's money in that cupboard?

Suddenly, the old man looked up, and Joey quickly turned and walked away.



He did not go to bed that night. He put all his things into a bag, sat in an armchair and waited. Midnight came, and went. At two o'clock in the morning he went down the stairs and out of the house.

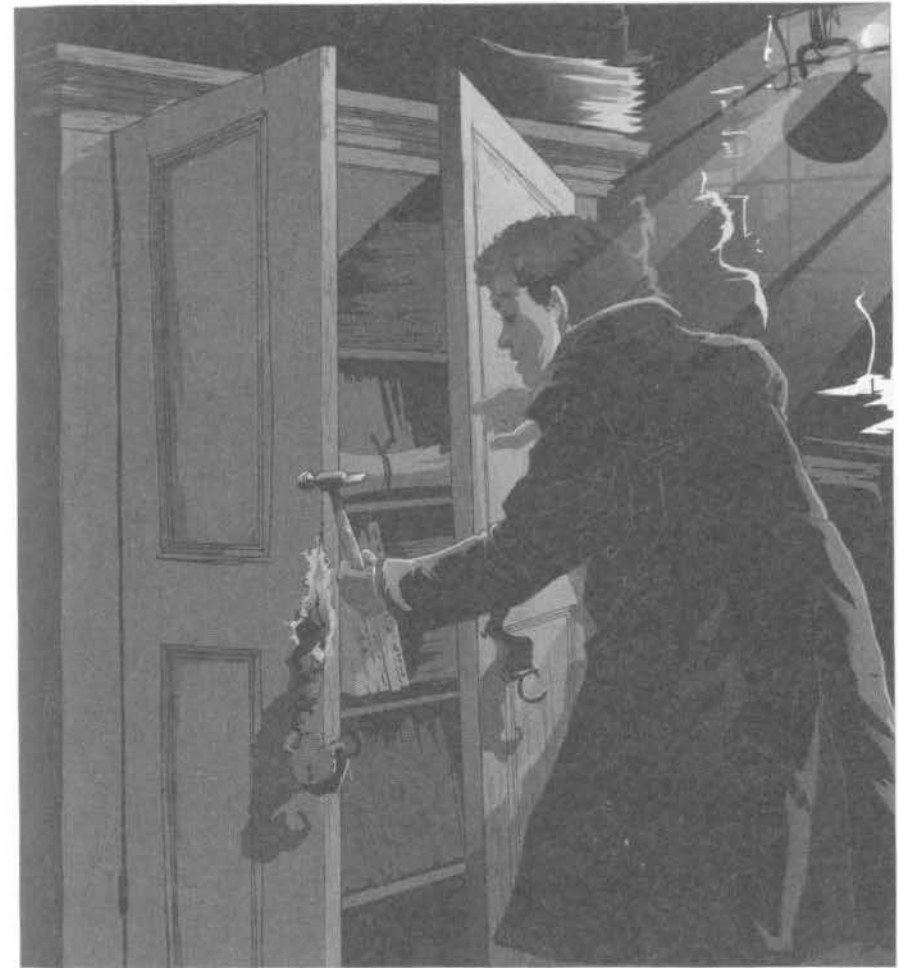
It was a cold night and Joey looked up at the moon in the sky.

'Are you a lucky moon?' he said, smiling. 'Joey's lucky moon?'

He walked to Goldman's shop and looked round. Nobody was in the street. He took a small hammer from his coat pocket and broke the glass in the shop door. Then he put his hand through and opened the door.

Joey moved quickly into the shop. He closed the door behind him and put his bag on the floor. Then he walked quietly across the shop to the door into the back room, opened it, and went through. It was dark, but moonlight came through the window, and Joey could see the big cupboard.

The little hammer soon opened the cupboard. There



The little hammer soon opened the cupboard.

were a lot of books and papers inside; some of the papers fell out on to the floor.

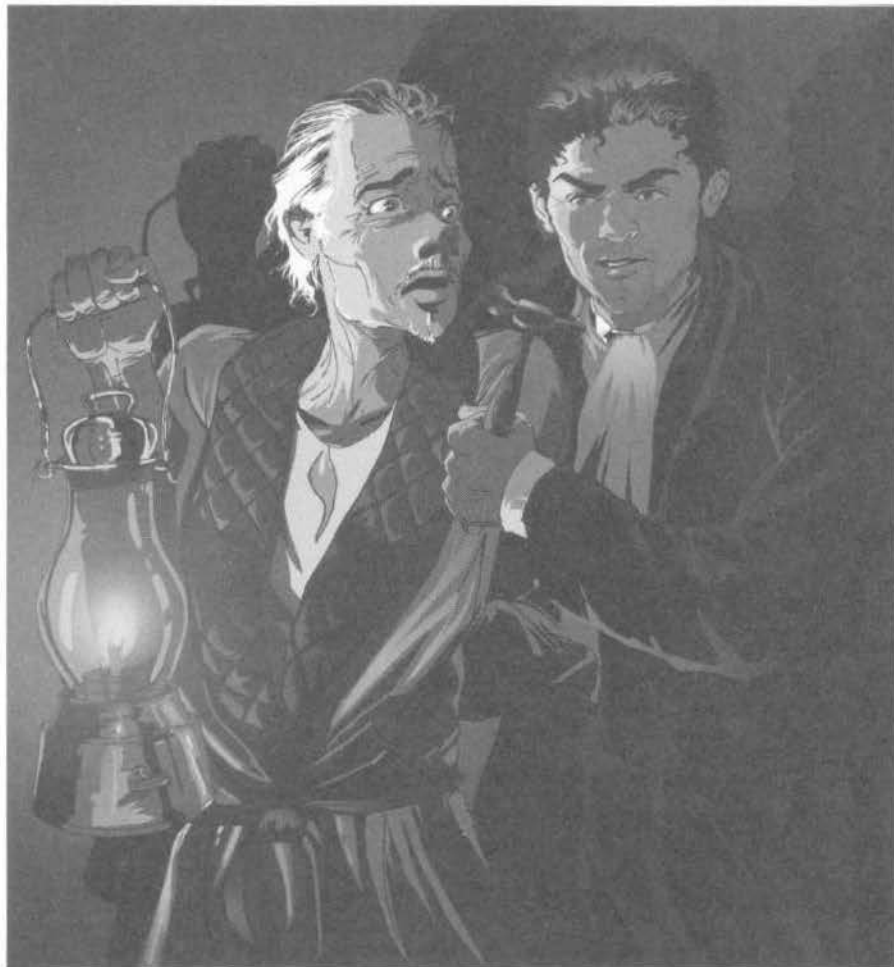
'Who's there?'

Joey did not move. Only his eyes moved, looking around the room. Then a door at the back of the room

opened, and Theo Goldman came in with an oil lamp. He saw Joey.

'What—!' he began.

Joey jumped across the room, grabbed the old man's arm, and pulled it up behind his back. Then he held the hammer in front of Goldman's face.



Joey pulled the old man's arm up behind his back.

'Where's the money?' he said. 'Tell me!'

'M-money?' Goldman said. 'What – what money? There isn't any money.'

'Yes, there is,' Joey said. 'You told Webber about it in the pub. A hundred pounds or more. Where is it?'

Goldman said nothing.

'Tell me,' Joey said, 'or I'm going to break your arms! First one arm, and then the other one. *Where is it?*'

Goldman tried to pull his arm away. He made small angry noises, but no words came out.

Joey held the hammer in front of Goldman's eyes. '*Tell me!* Or this hammer goes into your face!'

'All right! All right! It – it's under the floor,' Goldman said. 'Under the cupboard.'

Joey pushed the old man across to the cupboard. 'Get it,' he said. 'Now!'

The old man put the oil lamp on the floor and pulled the cupboard away from the wall. Then he got between the cupboard and the wall and pulled up some of the floor. There was a small box under the floor and Goldman got it out.

Joey grabbed the box from the old man's hands, and opened it. It was full of money.

Joey smiled.

'I know you!' Goldman said suddenly. 'You live at Albert Webber's house!'

‘Albert who?’ said Joey. ‘Don’t know him.’

He began to take the money out of the box and push it into the pockets of his coat.

‘Yes, you do! You live in his house,’ Goldman said. ‘Albert told me about you. You’re—’

‘Be quiet!’ Joey said. ‘All right, so you know me. But nobody’s going to *find* me.’ He laughed. ‘I can get a long way away with this money.’

All the money from Goldman’s box was now in Joey’s pockets. He gave Goldman a little push. ‘Now, get back in your bedroom and stay there.’ He pushed him again. ‘Go on! Get moving!’

The old man began to walk across the room with the oil lamp. Suddenly, he turned and hit Joey on the head with the lamp.

‘Aaagh!’ cried Joey.

The lamp broke and fell on the floor, next to the papers from the cupboard. The oil from the lamp ran across the floor, carrying the flames to the papers.

Goldman tried to run into the shop but Joey jumped on him and the two of them fell to the floor. The old man’s head hit the wall. After that, he did not move.

Joey heard the noise of the flames before he saw them. He looked behind him. The flames were big, and were already halfway up the legs of a table.

Joey jumped to his feet and ran through the shop. He



The flames were already halfway up the legs of a table.

found his bag by the front door, went out into the street and began to run again. At the end of the street, he stopped and looked back.

There were now flames in the shop window, and black smoke came from the shop door. He thought about the old man on the floor in the back room – but only for a second.

Then he turned and ran again.



Two days later, on Wednesday 10th April, 1912, Joey was in Southampton, with thousands of other people. They came to see the new ship there – the biggest and fastest ship in the world. It was the day of its first voyage across the Atlantic to New York, carrying more than two thousand people.

Some of the people in Southampton that day were the ship's passengers. Some of them just came to look at the wonderful new ship.

And there it was! Joey was a happy young man. He was a passenger, with a ticket in his pocket – a ticket to New York! Life was good, he thought.

'Joey's luck got me the money for my ticket!' he said, laughing. 'And Joey's luck is taking me to America. This is the end of my old life!'

And he walked onto the *Titanic*.



Hush Money



Behind *The Green Bird* pub there was a big car park. It was a busy pub, and every night there were lots of cars there. Tonight, there was a woman in the car park too. She stood in the dark behind a tree, watching and waiting.

Her name was Rosa, and she was twenty years old. She worked in a hotel six days a week but not on Mondays. On Mondays, Rosa did something different.

And today was Monday.

It was cold. Rosa pushed her hands into the pockets of her coat. It was a night for trousers, but Rosa wore a short skirt and nothing on her legs. That was important.

After a time a woman came out of the pub and walked across the car park to a blue Ford car. The woman was about fifty years old and she walked slowly. She sang quietly, with a little smile on her face.

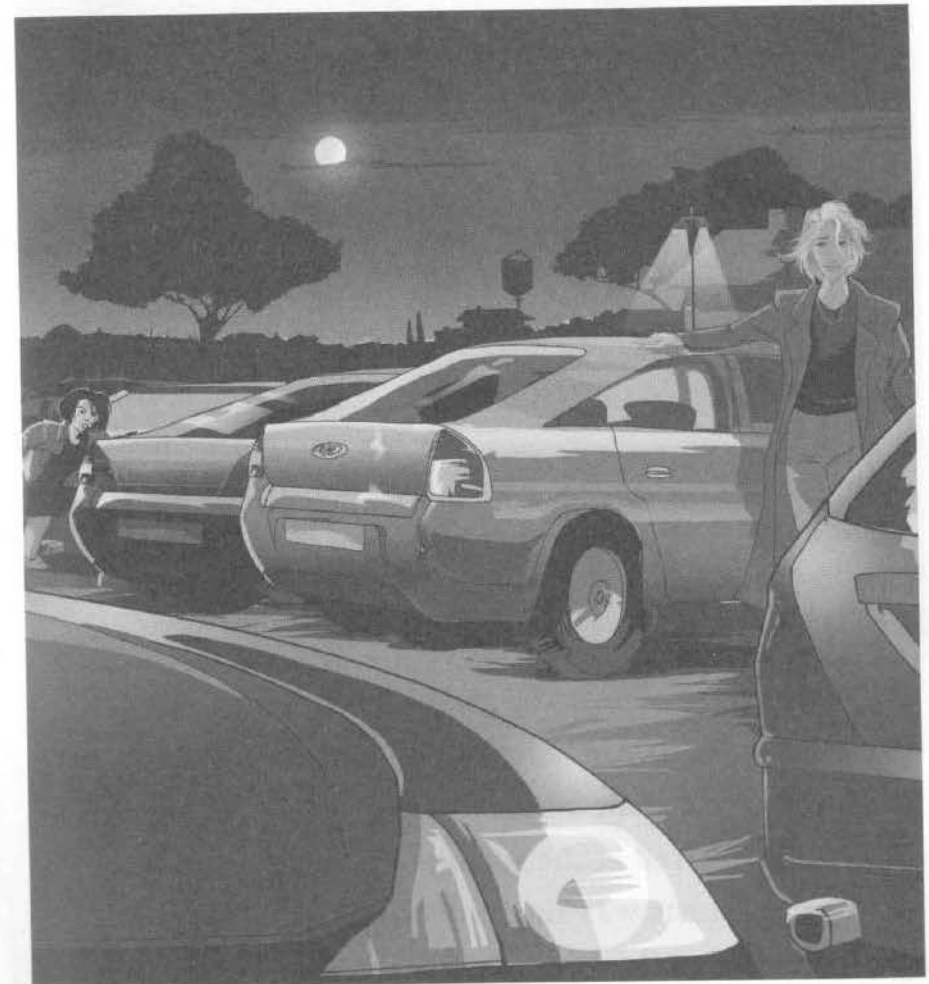
'She's drunk,' Rosa thought. 'But she's going to drive.'

The woman got to her car and put a hand on it. She wore a long green coat and grey trousers, and she had blonde hair. Very, very blonde hair.

'Oh dear, my head!' she said, then laughed.

'That hair colour came out of a bottle,' Rosa thought.

She took a small bottle from her pocket. There was some red liquid in it and she put some of the liquid on her leg. Then she ran quickly round the car park to the blue Ford.



Rosa ran quickly round the car park to the blue Ford.

The woman opened the car door and half-fell into the driving seat. She laughed. 'Oh, Dorothy Burns,' she sang. 'You're drunk again!'

Rosa was now behind her car, crouching on the ground. When the car began to move back, she jumped to her feet and hit the car with her hand – bang!

The car stopped suddenly and Rosa fell down on the ground behind the car. She put her hand on the red liquid on her leg, and quickly put some of it on the back of the car.

Dorothy Burns got out of her car, and walked round to the back. When she saw Rosa on the ground, her face went white.

'Oh!' she cried. 'What – what happened?'

'My leg!' Rosa said. 'Oh, my leg!' She began to cry.

'But – but what happened?' said Dorothy Burns. Then she saw the red liquid on Rosa's leg. 'Oh, there's blood on your leg!'

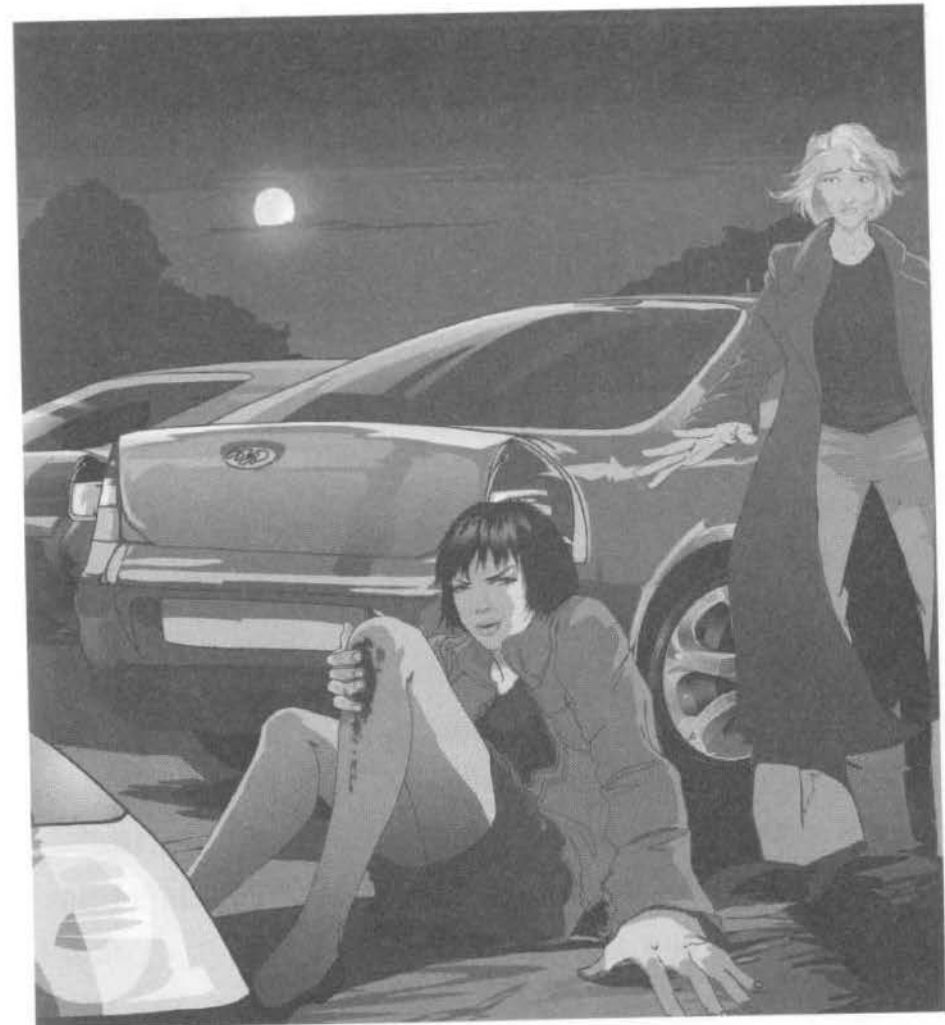
'Yes, because your car hit me, that's why!' Rosa said. She stopped crying, and began to look angry.

'I – I didn't see you behind me,' Dorothy Burns said.

'You didn't see me because you didn't *look*,' Rosa said angrily. She stared at the woman. 'You're drunk!'

Dorothy Burns was suddenly very afraid. 'I – I . . .'

'Yes, you smell of whisky! I can smell it from here,' Rosa said. 'I'm going to call the police. Now!'



When Dorothy saw Rosa on the ground, her face went white.

'Oh no, please!' Dorothy Burns said. 'I'm very, very sorry, but not the police, please! Listen, I can help you. I can drive you home and—'

'I'm not getting in that car with you!' Rosa said. 'You're drunk!'

'No!' Dorothy Burns said. 'Just one small whisky, that's all.'

'Oh yes? Tell that to the police.' Rosa stood up, holding her leg. 'What's the number of your car?'

'No! Please!' Dorothy Burns said. 'Not the police. Listen, I want to help you. Take a taxi to the hospital – I can give you the money for it. Go to the accident—'

'How much money?' said Rosa.

'Um . . . er, twenty pounds?' Dorothy Burns said.

'Fifty,' Rosa said.

'Well, how about thirty?' said Dorothy Burns.

'Fifty.'

'But I haven't got a lot of money with me.'

'Fifty. I'm calling the police now.' Rosa took a mobile phone out of her coat pocket.

'OK, OK,' said Dorothy Burns. She got her handbag from the car, took out fifty pounds, and gave the money to Rosa. 'Here you are,' she said.

Rosa took the money, and walked away. She went down the street to her car, a small, white Fiat, ten years old. She sat in the car and waited for the woman to drive away. Then Rosa drove home.

On the next three Monday evenings, Rosa went to three different pubs. She waited for a drunk or nearly drunk driver to come out. Sometimes she waited two hours or

more. Then she took out her little bottle of red liquid – and minutes later there was an 'accident'.

The drivers never wanted Rosa to call the police. They were always ready to give her money. Sometimes it was fifty pounds, sometimes a hundred. Once, a big fat man with gold teeth gave her two hundred pounds. That was a very good Monday.



The next Monday, Rosa found a pub in a street not far from *The Green Bird*. It was a very cold night, so she waited in her car. After an hour a man came out of the pub with a bottle of wine in one hand. He stood looking up and down the car park. Rosa watched him.

'He can't find his car,' she thought. 'He's drunk.'

After a minute or two, the man began to walk across the car park to a big red Honda. Twice his foot slipped and he nearly fell. But at last he got to the Honda and began to open the door.

Rosa put some red liquid on her leg and got out of her car. She walked quickly to the Honda and crouched down at the back of it, ready for the 'accident'.

'Hey, you!'

Rosa quickly looked round. A woman ran across the car park – a woman in a green coat and grey trousers, a woman with very blonde hair. She had a camera in her hand.



'Hey, you!'

Rosa stood up and began to walk away, but Dorothy Burns was quicker than she was.

'Oh no, you don't!' Dorothy shouted. She grabbed Rosa's arm. 'You were at *The Green Bird* four weeks ago.'

'What? Who are you? What are you talking about?' said Rosa. 'I'm just going home. Let go of my arm!'

The man with the wine bottle in his hand came round to the back of his Honda. 'Hey! What are we doing, what's happening?' he said. His face was very red and his eyes were half-closed.

'This woman took fifty pounds from me four weeks ago,' Dorothy Burns told him. 'She's a fake. She gets down behind your car – and then says your car hit her! But it doesn't! She does it to get money out of you. She says, "Oh, you're drunk, and I'm going to call the police." And because you *are* drunk and you're afraid, you give her money to stop her. I did.'

The man looked at Rosa. 'Wh-a-a-a-t?' he said.

Rosa pulled her arm away, but before she could run, Dorothy Burns grabbed her other arm.

'Look at her leg,' she said to the man. 'That's blood on it. But why? How did it get there? *She* put it there – all ready for the accident. *Your* accident. Because in a minute you're going to hit her with your car. And then she's going to cry out, "Oh, my leg! My leg". But nothing happened! She's a fake!'

At last the man understood. He stared at Rosa and his face got redder. 'You little . . .!' he said angrily. He pushed Rosa, and she fell to the ground. But before he could hit her again, Dorothy Burns pulled him away.

'No, wait,' she said.

The bottle of wine fell from the man's hand. It hit the ground next to Rosa and broke. Wine went over her face and her coat.

'My wine!' the man cried. He looked angrily at the two



The man stared at Rosa and his face got redder.

women, then began to walk back to the pub. 'Got to get some more wine,' he said. 'For my wife.'

Rosa stood up slowly and then began to walk away.

'Wait!' said Dorothy Burns.

Rosa laughed. 'Why? I don't want to talk to you.'

'Oh, I think you do,' Dorothy Burns said. 'You see, I took some photos of you – when you were behind that man's car, waiting. Interesting photos, they are.'

Rosa stopped, then walked back to Dorothy. 'How did you find me?' she said.

'I went to a different pub every night. And waited in the car parks and watched. And here you are – doing your dirty little blackmail again.'

'It's not blackmail,' said Rosa quickly. 'He *was* drunk. And *you* were drunk too, that other night.'

'But my car didn't hit you!' said Dorothy.

'How do you know?' said Rosa. 'You were drunk!'

'No, not drunk. Just happy, that's all,' said Dorothy. 'When I got home, I began to think. You wanted that fifty pounds – you wanted it very much. And I know all about blackmail. You see, I was a fake once, too.'

Rosa stared at her. 'What did you do?' she asked.

'When I was a child,' said Dorothy Burns, 'my mother and father often went out in the evenings – to dinner, to their friends, to the cinema . . . They always got a babysitter in to stay with me because I was only ten

years old. The babysitters were always girls, usually students, about eighteen or nineteen years old. They needed the money badly. Students always do. But I liked money too.'

Dorothy Burns smiled. 'It was easy. At first I was nice to them. Then I said, "I want half your babysitting money, or I'm going to tell mummy about you. I'm going to say things like this. You hit me. You put very hot water on my hands. You pull my hair. You put me in the dark . . ." These things weren't true, of course. But the girls were afraid of my mother. She was famous, you see. She wrote books about children, and was always on television. And when she was angry, she wasn't a very nice person. And so the babysitters said nothing, and gave me half their money.'

'What a nice child you were!' Rosa said.

'No, I wasn't nice,' said Dorothy. 'But some people get nicer when they get older. I don't do blackmail now, but I know a blackmailer when I see one.'

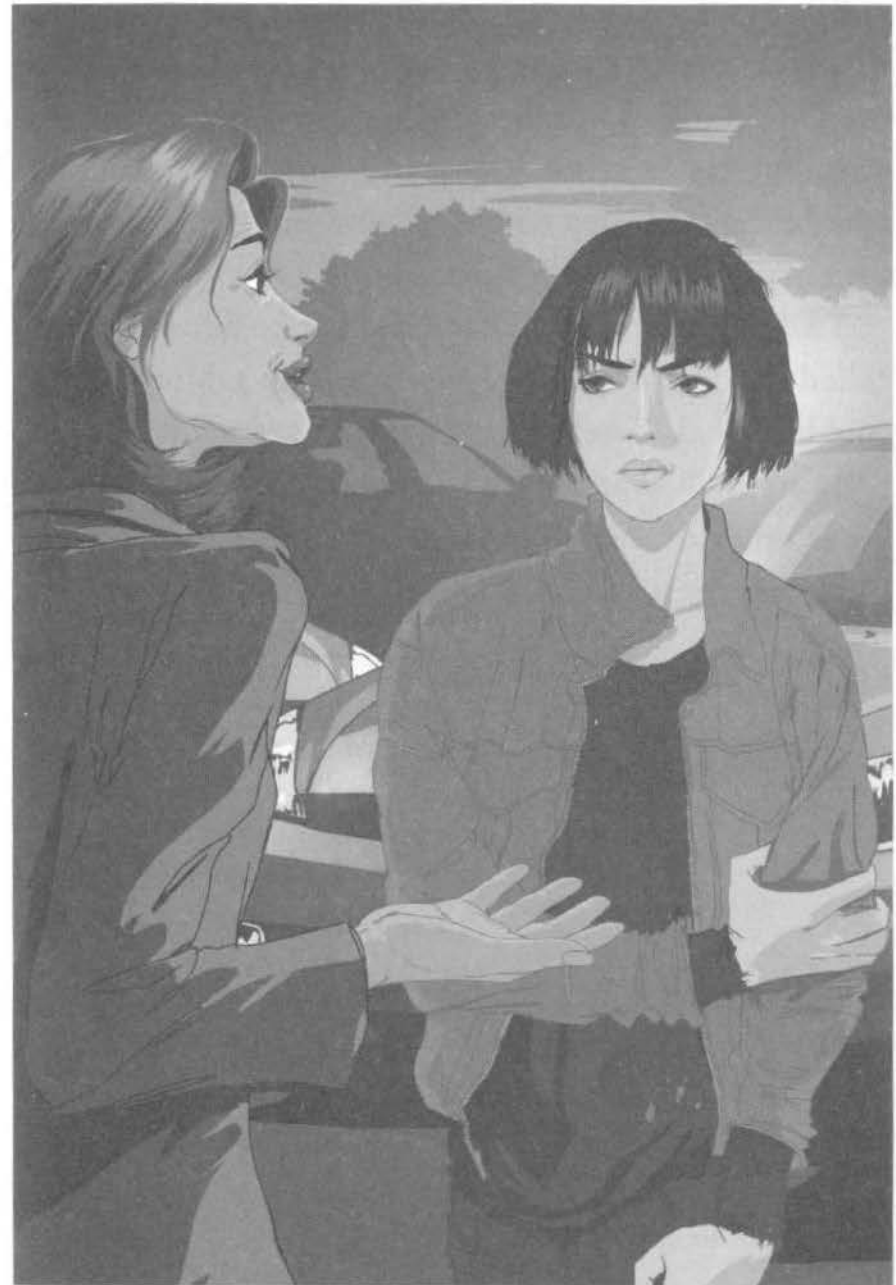
She smiled at Rosa, and Rosa stared back at her.

'What do you want?' she said.

Dorothy Burns put out her hand. 'I want my fifty pounds back, of course.'

• • •

Three minutes later, Rosa drove her little Fiat out of the pub car park. She was *very* angry.



'I want my fifty pounds back, of course.'

Because she was angry, she drove very fast.

Two kilometres from the pub, Rosa's car went off the road and hit a wall. She didn't die, but she broke one arm, one leg, and hit her head badly on the car. She couldn't move, she couldn't get out of the car, she couldn't get her mobile phone . . .

Two policemen found her in her car an hour later, and called an ambulance. Rosa's face was white and she couldn't speak. The policemen were not friendly.

'I can smell wine on her,' the first policeman said.

'Another drunk driver!' the second policeman said.

'Why do people drink and drive?'

GLOSSARY

- apartment** a group of rooms for living in (part of a larger house)
- babysitter** a person who looks after your child while you are away from home
- bikini** a piece of clothing in two pieces that women wear for swimming and lying in the sun
- blackmail** saying that you will tell something bad about somebody if they do not give you money
- blonde** (of hair) light yellow or gold in colour
- blood** the red liquid inside your body
- buy** (past tense **bought**) to get something with money
- church** a building where people go to pray to God
- crouch** (*v*) to bend your knees and back so that your body is close to the ground
- drunk** (*adj*) people get drunk after drinking too much alcohol
- edge** the part along the end or side of something
- fake** (*n*) a copy of something, made to trick people
- fall** (past tense **fell**) to go down suddenly
- flame** the bright red/orange parts of a fire
- glass** you drink water from a glass
- good-looking** nice to look at
- grab** to take something quickly and roughly
- hammer** a tool with a handle and a heavy metal part, used for hitting nails into wood
- horn** a thing in a car that makes a loud sound
- jump** to move quickly with both feet off the ground
- kiss** (*v*) to touch someone lovingly with your mouth
- lamp** (*oil*) a thing that burns oil to give light

- landlord** a man who owns a house and other people pay to live in it
- liquid** water, oil and milk are liquids
- luck** chance: things (good or bad) that happen to you
- marry** to take somebody as your husband or wife
- moon** the big thing that shines in the sky at night
- passenger** a person who travels in a bus, ship, etc.
- pickpocket** a person who steals things from people's pockets
- pub** a place where people go to have a drink, meet friends, etc.
- roof** the top of a building
- secret** something that you do not want other people to know
- sell** (past tense **sold**) to give something to somebody and get money for it
- shout** to speak very loudly
- shy** not able to talk easily to people you do not know
- slip** (*v*) to move on something smooth or wet and nearly fall
- slippery** difficult to hold or stand on because it is smooth or wet
- sound** (*v*) to make a sound
- stare** (*v*) to look at somebody for a long time
- steal** (past tense **stole**) to take something that is not yours
- suntan** the brown colour of skin that has been in the sun
- suntan oil** liquid that you put on your skin to help it to go brown
- tile** a flat square thing that people use to cover walls and floors
- toot** (*n*) a short high sound made by a car horn
- turn** (*v*) to move your body round
- wallet** a small flat case to carry money in
- wave** (*v*) to move your hand to say hello or goodbye to someone
- wear** (past tense **wore**) to have clothes on your body
- wine** a drink made from grapes

Sister Love

and Other Crime Stories

ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITIES

Before Reading

- 1 Read the story introduction on the first page of the book, and the back cover. What do you know now about the stories? Tick one box for each sentence.

	YES	NO
1 Karin and Marcia are good friends.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Marcia stays at home because she wants to.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 Karin has a more interesting life than her sister.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Joey works hard to get his money.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 In the beginning, Joey's crimes are small.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 People like Joey so they give him money.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7 Rosa makes a lot of money in her job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8 People give Rosa money because they are afraid of her.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9 Rosa sells her silence once a week.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- 2 What happens in these stories? Can you guess? Choose one answer for each of these questions.

- 1 At the end of *Sister Love*, one person is dead. Who is it?
- Marcia.
 - Karin.
 - Marcia's father.
 - Marcia's boyfriend.

- 2 In *Sister Love*, the person dies because of a liquid. Which liquid is it?

- Very hot cooking oil.
- Red wine.
- Bath water.
- Suntan oil.

- 3 In *Joey's Luck*, what does Joey do at the end of the story?

- He leaves the country.
- He goes to the police.
- He dies in a fire.
- He lives a better life.

- 4 In *Hush Money*, Rosa meets somebody. What is this person like?

- Nicer than Rosa.
- Cleverer than Rosa.
- Very old and very rich.
- Very ill.

- 3 Some of these things are in the stories, but not all of them. Can you guess which ones? Tick some boxes.

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a gun | <input type="checkbox"/> a car park | <input type="checkbox"/> a bicycle | <input type="checkbox"/> a bikini |
| <input type="checkbox"/> a pub | <input type="checkbox"/> a photo | <input type="checkbox"/> a suitcase | <input type="checkbox"/> a cupboard |
| <input type="checkbox"/> a fire | <input type="checkbox"/> a knife | <input type="checkbox"/> a ship | <input type="checkbox"/> a river |
| <input type="checkbox"/> a train | <input type="checkbox"/> a ticket | <input type="checkbox"/> a hammer | <input type="checkbox"/> a dog |
| <input type="checkbox"/> a letter | <input type="checkbox"/> a radio | <input type="checkbox"/> a garden | <input type="checkbox"/> a camera |

ACTIVITIES

While Reading

Read *Sister Love* to the bottom of page 9. Can you guess what happens next? Choose answers to these questions.

- 1 What does Marcia learn?
 - a) Karin is taking Howard from her.
 - b) Howard wants to marry Karin.
 - c) Karin and Howard are going to go away together.
 - d) Howard loves Karin, but she is tired of him.
- 2 What is Marcia going to do?
 - a) She is going to kill Howard and Karin.
 - b) She is going to kill Howard.
 - c) She is going to kill Karin.
 - d) She is going to tell people at church about Howard.

Read *Joey's Luck*, and then put these halves of sentences together.

- 1 Joey learned about Theo Goldman's money . . .
- 2 Joey left the house late at night . . .
- 3 When Goldman came into the back room, . . .
- 4 When Goldman hit Joey with the oil lamp, . . .
- 5 Joey saw the flames and the smoke . . .
- 6 Joey was a happy young man in Southampton . . .
- 7 . . . it broke and fell on the floor.

- 8 . . . but he did not go back to the shop.
- 9 . . . when Goldman told his friend about it in the pub.
- 10 . . . because he had a ticket for the *Titanic*.
- 11 . . . Joey pulled his arm up behind his back.
- 12 . . . and walked quickly to Goldman's shop.

Read *Hush Money* to the bottom of page 33. Can you guess what happens next? Choose answers to these questions.

- 1 What does the woman in the green coat want to do?
 - a) She wants to take Rosa's photo.
 - b) She wants to take Rosa to the police station.
 - c) She wants to get money from the man.
 - d) She wants to get money from Rosa.
- 2 What happens next?
 - a) Rosa runs away.
 - b) The man calls the police.
 - c) The woman gets her money back.
 - d) Rosa gives half of the man's money to the woman.
- 3 What does Rosa do after she leaves the car park?
 - a) She has an accident in her car.
 - b) She goes to the police.
 - c) She stops asking people for hush money.
 - d) She starts to work with the woman in the green coat.

ACTIVITIES

After Reading

- 1 Here are three characters – one from each story. Who are they, and what are they thinking about? Complete the passages with the words below (one word for each gap).

afraid, anybody, called, come, easy, felt, find, for, hit, matter, money, night, pounds, pretty, real, sister, soon, Sunday, think, tried, wait, who

- 1 Marcia has a younger ____! She's a very ____ girl too. I ____ not to look at her too much, but it wasn't _____. And she ____ me good-looking! I ____ good when she said that. But, really, Marcia is the one ____ me.
- 2 ____ is he, this Joe Smith? And is that his ____ name? I don't think so – but it doesn't _____. I'm interested in his ____, not his name. And where's he going to ____ a week's money on a ____? Well, I'm not going to _____. He gives me the money ____, or he goes.
- 3 Not a good ____! I've got a bad head, and that woman's got my fifty _____. But – where did she ____ from? I didn't see ____ in the car park. Perhaps my car didn't ____ her. I was drunk and ____, so I didn't stop and _____. She's a clever woman – but I can be clever too...

- 2 Here is a new illustration for one of the stories. Find the best place to put the picture, and answer these questions.

The picture goes on page ____, in the story _____.

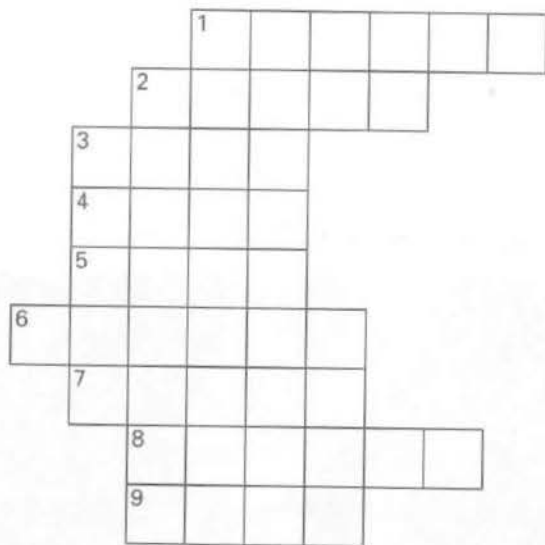
- Who is this person?
- What or who is she photographing?
- Why is she doing this?

Now write a caption for the illustration.



Caption: _____

- 3 Use the clues below to complete this crossword with words from the story. Then find the hidden nine-letter word in the crossword, and answer the question about it.



- 1 Karin liked to wear this in the roof garden.
- 2 You can drink wine or water from this.
- 3 To take something quickly.
- 4 Joey had a lot of this.
- 5 Rosa didn't have real accidents – she was a _____.
- 6 Joey broke the glass with this.
- 7 To look at somebody for a long time.
- 8 Rosa had some red _____ in a bottle in her pocket.
- 9 To fall after you put your foot on something wet.

The hidden word is _____.

Who uses this, in which story, and why?

- 4 What does Karin say to Howard on the day when they are late? Put their conversation in the right order, and write in the speakers' names. Karin speaks first (number 3).

- 1 _____ 'Well, no, I don't, but ...'
- 2 _____ 'Of course not. It's a secret – our secret.'
- 3 _____ 'It's a lovely evening, Howard. Do you need to get home quickly?'
- 4 _____ 'So which way to this pub, then?'
- 5 _____ 'But Marcia wouldn't like it, Karin.'
- 6 _____ 'All right – but don't say anything to Marcia.'
- 7 _____ 'Marcia isn't here, Howard – but I am. Just a quiet drink – what's wrong with that?'
- 8 _____ 'How about a drink? I know a nice pub by the sea.'

- 5 What happened after each story? Write the answer you like best using the notes (or write your own).

- Police / find / bottle / take Marcia away // Howard / die / broken heart // Marcia / go / prison
- Marcia's father / die // Marcia / marry / Howard // Howard / always good / to her
- Joey / die / on *Titanic* // No more luck
- Joey / not die / *Titanic* // America / lots of luck / rich!
- Rosa / make friends / hospital // Better job / stop blackmail
- Rosa / blackmail / again // Real accident / kill her

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Escott worked in business before becoming a writer. Since then he has written many books for readers of all ages, but enjoys writing crime and mystery thrillers most of all. He was born in Somerset, in the west of England, but now lives in Bournemouth on the south coast. When he is not working, he likes looking for long-forgotten books in small back-street bookshops, watching old Hollywood films on video, and walking for miles along empty beaches.

He has written or retold more than twenty stories for Oxford Bookworms. His original stories include *Goodbye, Mr Hollywood* (at Stage 1), *Dead Man's Island* (at Stage 2), and *Agatha Christie, Woman of Mystery* (at Stage 2), which is the true story of the life of perhaps the most famous crime author in the world.

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STARTER • 250 HEADWORDS

present simple – present continuous – imperative –
can/cannot, must – going to (future) – simple gerunds ...

Her phone is ringing – but where is it?

Sally gets out of bed and looks in her bag. No phone. She looks under the bed. No phone. Then she looks behind the door. There is her phone. Sally picks up her phone and answers it. *Sally's Phone*

STAGE 1 • 400 HEADWORDS

... past simple – coordination with *and, but, or* –
 subordination with *before, after, when, because, so ...*

I knew him in Persia. He was a famous builder and I worked with him there. For a time I was his friend, but not for long. When he came to Paris, I came after him – I wanted to watch him. He was a very clever, very dangerous man. *The Phantom of the Opera*

STAGE 2 • 700 HEADWORDS

... present perfect – *will (future) – (don't) have to, must not, could* –
 comparison of adjectives – simple *if* clauses – past continuous –
 tag questions – *ask/tell + infinitive ...*

While I was writing these words in my diary, I decided what to do. I must try to escape. I shall try to get down the wall outside. The window is high above the ground, but I have to try. I shall take some of the gold with me – if I escape, perhaps it will be helpful later. *Dracula*

... *should, may* – present perfect continuous –
 causative – relative clauses – indirect statements ...

Of course, it was most important that no one should see Colin, Mary, or Dickon entering the secret garden. So Colin gave orders to the gardeners that they must all keep away from that part of the garden in future. *The Secret Garden*

STAGE 4 • 1400 HEADWORDS

... past perfect continuous – passive (simple forms) –
would conditional clauses – indirect questions –
 relatives with *where/when* – gerunds after prepositions/phrases ...

I was glad. Now Hyde could not show his face to the world again. If he did, every honest man in London would be proud to report him to the police. *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*

STAGE 5 • 1800 HEADWORDS

... future continuous – future perfect –
 passive (modals, continuous forms) –
would have conditional clauses – modals + perfect infinitive ...

If he had spoken Estella's name, I would have hit him. I was so angry with him, and so depressed about my future, that I could not eat the breakfast. Instead I went straight to the old house. *Great Expectations*

STAGE 6 • 2500 HEADWORDS

... passive (infinitives, gerunds) – advanced modal meanings –
 clauses of concession, condition

When I stepped up to the piano, I was confident. It was as if I knew that the prodigy side of me really did exist. And when I started to play, I was so caught up in how lovely I looked that I didn't worry how I would sound. *The Joy Luck Club*

Sherlock Holmes and the Sport of Kings

SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

Retold by Jennifer Bassett

Horseracing is the sport of kings, perhaps because racehorses are very expensive animals. But when they win races, they can make a lot of money too – money for the owners, for the trainers, and for the people who put bets on them to win.

Silver Blaze is a young horse, but already the winner of many races. One night he disappears from his stables, and someone kills his trainer. The police want the killer, and the owner wants his horse, but they can't find them. So what do they do?

They write to 221B Baker Street, London, of course – to ask for the help of the great detective, Sherlock Holmes.

BOOKWORMS · CLASSICS · STAGE 1

The Withered Arm

THOMAS HARDY

Retold by Jennifer Bassett

A woman and a man . . . words of love whispered on a summer night. Later, there is a child, but no wedding-ring. And then the man leaves the first woman, finds a younger woman, marries her . . . It's an old story.

– Yes, it's an old, old story. It happens all the time – today, tomorrow, a hundred years ago. People don't change. But this story, set among the green hills of southern England, has something different about it. Perhaps it is only a dream, or perhaps it is magic – a kind of strange dark magic that begins in the world of dreams and phantoms . . .

Sister Love and Other Crime Stories



Some sisters are good friends, some are not. Sometimes there is more hate in a family than there is love. Karin is beautiful and has lots of men friends, but she can be very unkind to her sister Marcia. Perhaps when they were small, there was love between them, but that was a long time ago.

They say that everybody has one crime in them. Perhaps they only take an umbrella that does not belong to them. Perhaps they steal from a shop, perhaps they get angry and hit someone, perhaps they kill... (Word count 5,565)



? CRIME
& MYSTERY

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STAGE 1 400 Headwords

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