

The story continues...

Lady Prescott came to the table and sat . 'I made a call to a friend of mine, Mr Carruthers. She'd like to meet you. I said we'd be in her office just after five. So why don't you drink your coffee and eat your cheeseburger and finish the French fries, and then we can set .'

'But where are we going?' Frederick said. 'And who is your friend?'

'For the moment, that must remain a secret,' Lady Prescott replied. 'But she's an important woman and I think she can help you. Oh, and do cheer , Mr Carruthers. You mustn't worry so much. It'll all work in the end.'

Frederick drank his coffee, ate his cheeseburger, finished his French fries and then stood .

They walked to the car – along Crawford Street, down a couple of side alleys, over the stone bridge that crossed the canal. And a few minutes later, the blue Rolls Royce was on the road again.

Frederick was exhausted. The last twenty-four hours were beginning to catch with him. And, as the car sped the motorway, he closed his eyes and gently nodded , falling ever deeper into sleep.



A couple of hours later, Frederick felt someone tapping on his shoulder.

'Come , Mr Carruthers,' Lady Prescott said. 'Wake . We're nearly there.'

Frederick woke with a start. And at first he thought he was still dreaming. Because there – right ahead of them – was a vast glass and metal building that he knew all too well. But this was no dream. And their car was heading straight for the main entrance.

'Where are you taking me?' Frederick shouted. 'This is the Head Office of my old bank. You've set me , haven't you? You're going to turn me ! I should never have trusted you. Stop the car right now! Let me !'

Frederick took his seat belt and tried to get the car. But Lady Prescott turned and dragged him inside.

'For goodness' sake, calm , Mr Carruthers,' she said. 'I haven't set you and I'm not going to turn you . And don't get so worked . You're as bad as my husband. Now just listen to me. When we were in the take-away, I rang your Head Office and fixed an appointment with Karen Blackstone. She's a good friend of mine. We went to school together.'

'Karen Blackstone?' Frederick said. 'But she's the Managing Director of the bank.'

'Exactly, Mr Carruthers. And we're on our way to her office. She's going to give you a new job.'

'You must be joking,' said Frederick. 'The bank would never dream of taking me again. I've got a criminal record for stealing their money.'

'Well, just you wait and see,' Lady Prescott replied. 'I think you're for a surprise.'

The blue Rolls Royce pulled in front of a huge skyscraper that seemed to pierce the clouds. They got the car and walked into the main lobby. Then they made their way to the Managing Director's penthouse suite. As the lift rose smoothly to the eighty-ninth floor, Frederick broke into a cold sweat.

A thousand thoughts were running his mind. Could he really trust Lady Prescott? Was he walking into a trap? Would the police be there to arrest him again? And what would Karen Blackstone make of his clothes? He stared at himself in the mirror. He wasn't exactly dressed up for the occasion. In the past twenty-four hours, he'd crawled mud, swum lakes, climbed

trees, jumped trains, rolled hills and put a spare wheel the blue Rolls Royce. And now, after all that, he looked like a scarecrow in a thunderstorm. The stains on his shirt and his crumpled prison trousers didn't quite fit with the thick-pile carpet and the soft leather chairs.

When the lift doors opened, they were met by a tall, angular secretary who took one look at Frederick's bedraggled appearance and gave a shrill sniff of disapproval. The woman showed them into the Managing Director's office and sniffed again. Then she turned and closed the door behind her.