

The story continues...

'Oh, that's simple,' Lady Prescott replied. 'I fell in love. Strange though it may seem, I left Birmingham to be with Gerald Prescott – the gutless, brainless, spineless fool who is now governor of Newtown Prison. You look a bit surprised, Mr Carruthers. Then perhaps I should explain.'

There was a time when my husband was a bright, tender young man. It's only recently that he's turned a workaholic who eats, drinks and sleeps prison life.

I met him when I was just eighteen. I was in my last term at school and Gerald was studying at the local technical college. He was absolutely broke and so he'd taken a part-time job at a take-away restaurant called The Birmingham Big Burger Bar. The take-away was in Crawford Street. It was on my way home from school. One day, I went in to get some chips. Gerald was serving behind the counter. He smiled me and I felt a cold shiver run my spine.

After that I went to the take-away every day. I wasn't hungry. I just wanted to see Gerald. Anyway, one afternoon he asked me and we went for a walk in the park. We got really well and I started seeing him all the time. He used to walk me to school in the morning and he'd come and pick me when the classes were over. And then – all of a sudden – I fell in love with him. I don't know why. It just happened that way.

When my father found what was going , he went crazy. He didn't want his only daughter going with someone who cooked hamburgers in a take-away. He told me that I had to stop seeing Gerald straightaway.

I had to make a choice. Should I obey my father and split with the person I loved? Or should I defy my parents and go seeing him? It didn't take me long to make my mind! I knew that I couldn't give Gerald . And so I had to work some way of deceiving my parents.

The plan was simple. I pretended that I'd obeyed my father. I said that I'd broken with Gerald. I cried for two or three days and went ten packets of tissues. I stopped eating and slammed lots of doors. I put a really good show. My parents were completely taken .

But whenever my father's back was turned, I would slip of the house and go and meet Gerald secretly, in the park or at the take-away. When I came home, I made some story or other to explain where I'd been. "I was at a friend's house playing records" or "I was visiting a museum in the centre of the town".

My father seemed happy that I'd suddenly made lots of new friends who had money in their pockets and didn't cook burgers. But he didn't know what I was really to...'

Lady Prescott suddenly broke and – for the next minute or so – they walked in silence. Frederick looked straight ahead. He said nothing. There was no need to talk. They crossed a main road and walked past a school. And then, as they turned a narrow side street, Lady Prescott picked the story again...