Max recognised the man (1)..... moment he walked into the café.

Fifteen years had passed, but some faces you simply (2)..... forget.

Max lowered his head and pretended to wipe the counter. His pulse quickened. Across the room, the stranger removed his sunglasses and slowly scanned the café.

They've found me.

Fifteen years earlier, Max (3)..... been twenty-eight, unemployed and behind with his rent. Desperate, he had taken out a payday loan. It wasn't much, and he had been certain he (4).....repay it within weeks.

He was wrong.

Interest accumulated (5)..... an alarming rate. Then came penalties and extra charges. Within months, the original debt had multiplied into a sum he (6)..... possibly afford. When he stopped paying, the threatening calls began.

One evening, two men arrived at his flat. They spoke calmly, (7)..... somehow made it worse. (8)..... leaving, one placed a photograph of Max's younger sister on the kitchen table.

"People should always pay (9).....they owe."

Max understood.

(10).....midnight, he was gone.

For the next fifteen years, he became an expert at disappearing. He changed towns, names and jobs constantly, working in warehouses, restaurants and garages. He avoided close friendships and questions about his past.

Fear became a habit. An unfamiliar car outside his flat? Move. Someone asking questions? Move. A mysterious phone call? Move.

Then he arrived in Bellford.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

The small coastal town felt different. Max found work at a café called The Corner Cup and rented a modest flat nearby. For once, he began to relax. Then Anna walked into the café.

She was confident, quick-witted and persistent enough to get past the barriers Max had spent years building. She came in most mornings and always ordered a cappuccino.

“You look as (11)..... you’re expecting trouble,” she joked one morning.

“Maybe I have a stressful job.”

“You make coffee, Max.”

He laughed.

Soon, coffee became dinner, then weekends together and long walks beside the harbour. Gradually, Max stopped checking (12).....unfamiliar face. He even began imagining a future with Anna.

LIVEWORKSHEETS