**Love or Money**

**Chapter 1**

The Clarkson family lived in the country near Cambridge, about half a mile from the nearest village and about a mile from the river. They had a big, old house with a beautiful garden, a lot of flowers and many old trees.

One Thursday morning in July, Jackie came in from the garden. She was a tall, fat woman, thirty years old. It was the hottest day of the year, but she wore a warm brown skirt and yellow shirt. She went into the kitchen to get a drink of water. Just then the phone rang.

‘Cambridge 1379,’ Jackie said.

‘Hello. This is Diane. I want to talk to mother.’

‘Mother isn’t here,’ Jackie said. ‘She’s at the doctor’s.’

‘Why? What’s wrong?’

‘Nothing’s wrong,’ Jackie said. ‘Why are you telephoning? You are going to come this weekend? Mother wants to everyone to be here.’

‘Yes, I want to come,’ Diane said. ‘I’m phoning because I have no money for the train ticket.’

‘No money! Mother is always giving you money!’

‘This phone call is very expensive,’ Diane said coldly. ‘Tell mother please. I need the money.’

Jackie put the phone down. She took a cigarette from her bag and began to smoke. She felt angry because her sister always asked for money. Diane was twenty years old, the youngest in the family. She lived in London, in one room of a big house. She wanted to be a singer. She sang very well but she could never get work.

Jackie went back into the kitchen and began to make some sandwiches. Just then the back door opened, and her mother came in.

‘It’s very hot!’ Molly said. She took off her hat and put it down on the table. She was a tall, dark woman with beautiful eyes.

Two big, black dogs came into the kitchen after her and ran across to her. She sat down and put her hands on their heads.

Jackie put the sandwiches on the table. ‘Mother,’ she said, ‘Diane phoned. She wants money for her train ticket.’

Molly closed her eyes for a minute. Then she stood up. ‘This afternoon I want you to get the house ready for the weekend,’ she said. ‘Oh, and please go to the village later and get my tablets.’

‘Yes, mother,’ Jackie said.

Molly went to the door.

‘Mother, please wait a minute,’ Jackie said. ‘Peter Hobbs came here this morning. He’s very angry with you about that letter. He lost his job, you know. Why did you write to his office? He wants to talk to you about it.’

‘Well, I don’t want to talk to him,’ Molly said. She opened the door.

‘But mother, you don’t understand. He’s seventeen, and it was his first job. He’s very, very angry. He says…, he says he’s going to kill you!’

Molly did not answer. She went out of the room and closed to door.

**Chapter 2**

It was seven o’clock on Saturday evening.

**Chapter 4**

The police arrived very quickly. There were a lot of them. Some of them with cameras went upstairs to Molly’s room. Two detectives talked to Dr. Pratt in the kitchen. The family waited in the sitting room. It was a hot day again and the windows were open. The dogs sat quietly at Diane’s feet. Nobody talked. Jackie smoked. They waited for a long time. Suddenly the door opened and the two detectives came in.

‘Good morning. I am Detective Inspector Walsh and this is Sergeant Foster.’ The Inspector did not smile. He was a big man in an old black suit and a black hat and coat. He wore a coat because he always felt cold. ‘Last night someone put sleeping tablets in Mrs. Clarkson’s hot milk. We are going to question everybody, and we need a room, please.’

Roger stood up. ‘I’m Roger Clarkson. You can have my father’s old office. Come with me, it’s along here.’

The office was not a very big room, but there was a table and three or four chairs. Roger opened the window.

‘I would like to talk first to your uncle, Albert King,’ Inspector Walsh said. He took off his hat and coat and sat down behind the table.

‘Of course,’ said Roger and left the room.

Sergeant Foster waited by the door. He was a very tall young man with black hair and a nice smile. He was not very happy this morning because he usually played tennis on Sunday mornings. He was one of the best players at the Cambridge Tennis Club.

Albert came in and sat down.

‘I’m going to ask some questions, Mr. King,’ the Inspector said, ‘and Sergeant Foster is going to write it all down.’

Albert looked at his feet. ‘Yes, yes. It’s your job. I know that.’

‘Tell me about last night,’ Inspector Walsh asked quietly.

‘You were angry with Mrs. Clarkson.’

Albert looked at Inspector Walsh for the first time. ‘Yes, I was. Everyone was angry. Roger was angry. Diane wanted money to go to America. Then there’s a man called Tom Briggs…He wants half the garden for his farm. Molly was a rich woman. I need money because my wife Annie – Molly’s sister – is very ill. I told Molly this.’

‘What happened next?’

‘Well, Molly was angry with everyone and went upstairs. We went into the kitchen for coffee. Jackie wanted everyone to go up and say good night to Molly. She lives here with Molly so she wanted Molly to be happy. At first Roger said no. He was angry and didn’t want to see his mother.’

‘And did you see Molly in her room?’

‘Yes. I was tired and I went upstairs first. I went to Molly’s room and asked her for money again. But no – there was no money for her sister.’ Albert stopped and put his hand over his eyes.

Inspector Walsh watched Albert for minute. ‘Did you hear noises after you went to bed?’

‘Everyone went into Molly’s room to say good night, I think. Later, I heard someone…He – or she went downstairs. That was about midnight.’

‘Very well, Mr. King. Thank you, you can go now.’ Albert left the room.

Inspector Walsh put his hands behind his head. ‘What time is it? I’m hungry. We’re learning a lot, but I need some coffee.’

‘Shall I go to the kitchen?’ Sergeant Foster asked.

‘Oh, no. later. Let’s see Jackie Clarkson next.’

Jackie came in and sat down. She looked down at her hands and said nothing.

‘We found the empty bottle of your mother’s sleeping tablets in Diane’s room,’ the Inspector said suddenly. Then he waited. Jackie’s face did not change and she said nothing.

‘Tell me, did your mother get her tablets from the shop in the village?’

‘Yes. My mother usually took a sleeping tablet every night so she needed a lot of tablets. Sometimes she got them from the shop, sometimes I did. On Thursday, I asked Peter Hobbs to get them. He lives in the house across the road, and he often goes to the village on his bicycle.’

‘I see. Your mother wanted to stay in this house. How about you? Did you want to move?’

Jackie looked up for minute and then down at her hands again. ‘This is Mother’s house. I loved my mother. She was good to me.’

‘Did you see your mother in her room last night?’

‘Yes, everyone did. Diane made hot milk and took it to Mother. She usually drank a cup of hot milk before she slept.’

Inspector Walsh put his hands behind his head. Jackie was very quiet. ‘What did your mother say?’

Jackie opened her bag and looked for a cigarette.’ Can I smoke?’

‘Of course. This is your house,’ Inspector Walsh said. He watched Jackie. ‘What did your mother say?’ he asked again.

‘She wanted to go downstairs again. She remembered the dogs – she wanted to get some dinner for them. I went to my room and she went downstairs.’

‘What time was this?’

‘I don’t remember. About midnight, I think.’

‘And the cup of hot milk?’

‘It was on the table by her bed.’

‘Did you need your mother’s money?’

‘No, Inspector. Money is not important to me. There are more important things,’ Jackie said quietly.

‘Well, your uncle Albert wanted money. Tom Briggs wanted the garden. You wanted nothing?’

Jackie finished her cigarette and looked up at the Inspector. Her eyes were suddenly angry. ‘Don’t forget Peter Hobbs. He lost his job because of my mother. He wanted to kill her, you know. And what about Diane? You found the empty bottle in her bag.’

Inspector Walsh listened carefully. ‘We’re going to question everyone, Miss Clarkson.’

Jackie said nothing for a minute. ‘Would you like some sandwiches and coffee, Inspector?’

‘Ah! Yes, please!’ Inspector Walsh said warmly. ‘I would like sandwiches and coffee very much.’

Jackie left the room. Inspector Walsh thought about her. Why was she suddenly angry? The room was quiet.

**Chapter 5**

After the coffee and sandwiches, Inspector Walsh called Roger Clarkson to the office.