

in the river when her boat overturned. he looked blank. i m sorry, but you must have the wrong address. i live here on my own. and i haven t been near the river for ages. let alone fallen in.

dodie was beginning to suspect they had failed, but she clung to a faint shred of hope. perhaps we have the wrong number. or it was written down wrongly. how many apartments are there in this building? just a dozen, and i know everyone here. there isn t a girl like the one you describe. and dodie had just finished breakfast on the following day, alone because anna had gone out and elena had left a note saying she was going to the shop for more milk, when the doorbell rang. she went to open it and found frank, looking disgruntled. well? he demanded. what is it? what s what? dodie asked. he glared at her. young anna. she came over just now, said she needed some clothes, and you wanted to talk to me right away. it was something urgent. dodie shook her head. sorry, frank. i didn t send any such message. are you sure you understood her? i m not deaf! then she must have been - she stopped. frank, with an oath, had spun round and was racing down the drive. he almost collided with elena but didn t stop, swerving round her and vanishing behind the hedge. what was that for? elena asked as she came in and dropped her carriers of shopping. why, when i go for one item, do i always come home with two laden bags? dodie absentmindedly picked up an orange and began to peel it. he came here because anna told him i wanted to speak to him urgently. needless to say, i hadn t said anything of the kind. now what is she up to? she said she needed clothes from next door. i offered to go with her, because earlier she d been terrified of meeting frank, but she said she d be ok. so she wanted some time in the house by herself, and got rid of frank. he obviously suspected her. perhaps she wanted to look for something, or to retrieve something hidden. elena was filling the kettle. we ll ask her when she gets back. i ve invited elizabeth and serena to come over for a coffee. both? isn t that asking for war to break out? dodie asked, licking juice from her fingers. they were in a huddle together outside the shop. i don t think they ve spoken for at least a couple of years, perhaps longer, but they seem to have become buddies overnight. sharing out the spoils? i suspect it s something to do with who will have control over the book. serena may suspect elizabeth will inherit and she ll be frantic in case she goes to another agency. there s a lot of cash involved. but if serena negotiated this contract surely she ll be entitled to her cut in any case? i m no expert, but there may be other rights, film rights and so on, up for grabs. dodie rinsed her hands while elena put away her shopping. it doesn t seem real. and you hope they ll tell us? or at least explain the sudden friendliness. i hope anna doesn t come back to upset them. we can sit in the garden. it s going to be another warm day. she might see us and keep out of the way. i imagine she s rather sensitive herself at the moment about tangling with elizabeth. elena began to collect mugs and a plate of chocolate biscuits on a tray. while she was carrying it out to the garden the door bell rang again, and dodie went to open it. it was anna, flushed and looking furious, clutching a large case. she had clearly packed in haste since the odd edges of material were protruding from under the lid. over her shoulder she had a duffle bag, and several well-filled manilla folders poked out of the top. bloody man! she exclaimed. he s no right to try and stop me getting my own stuff! did he try to stop you with force? dodie asked. when frank had departed in such a rush he d looked angry enough not to care about charges of assault. anna shook her head. he came barging into my room, yelling at me that i hadn t any right to be there, but luckily daniel turned up, and i was able to get away. the agency was clearly having to do without either partner this morning, dodie reflected as anna heaved her case inside. what did he want? she asked. i didn t stop to ask! serena and elizabeth are coming over in a few minutes for coffee. dodie warned her. together? anna was incredulous. they are apparently the best of friends. anna snorted. that ll last for about five minutes! if you re lucky. i m going out for a walk. a long walk, so please tell elena not to expect me for lunch. she turned as two virtually identical open-topped mercedes swept into the drive. rich was so unimaginative! she said with a sigh, and dragged her case upstairs. dodie was suppressing a grin as she waited for the two women. was this rich s normal goodbye present to discarded mistresses and jealous wives? in which case anna seemed to have lost out in that respect too by being in situ when he died. it was the first time she d had a close look at either woman out of their cars. both were tall and thin, but there the resemblance stopped. serena s features were sharp, her nose and prominent chin pointed and her eyes a pale blue. her ginger hair was cut short in a style which was comfortable and easy rather than fashionable. she had lip gloss badly applied, and her only adornment was a huge gold ring set with what looked like genuine, and very expensive diamonds.