

From a window high up in the hotel, the girl looked down into the road. She saw Nick, and the man with white hair about fifty yards behind him. Nick got into his car, and the man with white hair walked quickly to a red car across the street. Five seconds later Nick drove away in his blue car, and the red car began to follow him.

When the girl saw this, she smiled, then went to put some things in her travel bag.



*The man with white hair walked quickly
to a red car across the street.*

A hand in the back

That evening, in his hotel room in Vancouver, Nick could not stop thinking about the girl in the Whistler café. Why did she come and sit with him? She didn't know him, and that story about a party in Toronto wasn't true. And she was worried about something. But what?

And that kiss! It was nice, of course, but why did she do it? 'Maybe she liked my face,' Nick thought. 'Or my brown eyes. But I'm not going to see her again, so it doesn't matter. Forget it.'

He put some money in his pocket and went downstairs to the hotel restaurant. But there were no free tables, so he walked down to Gastown and found a restaurant there.

After dinner, he went for a walk. Vancouver was a friendly city, and Nick liked walking through Gastown and Chinatown, looking in the shops and watching the people. It was nearly dark now, and it was a busy time of the evening. There were a lot of cars, and a lot of people.

After a time, Nick began to walk back to his hotel. He came to a busy street, and waited, with a small crowd of people, to go across. A tall woman in a blue dress stood next to him. She turned and smiled at him.

'It's the first warm evening of spring,' she said. 'It's nice to be out, after the long cold winter.'

'Yeah,' said Nick. 'It's great. It's—'

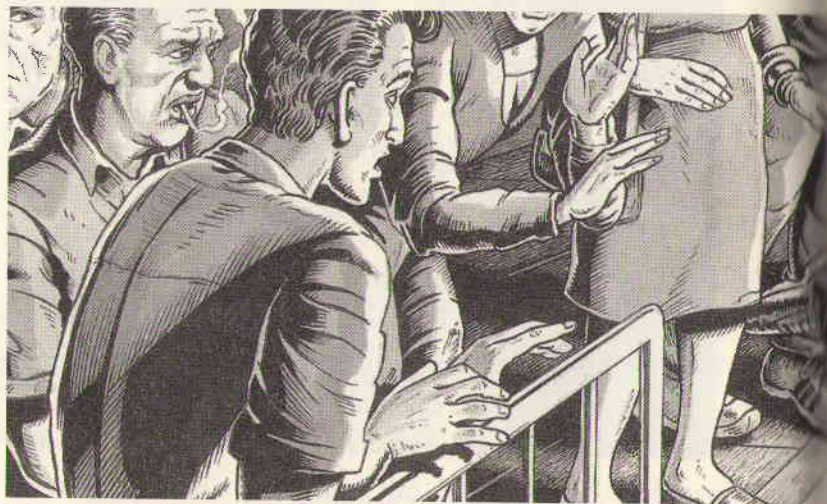
Suddenly, there was a hand in his back – and the hand pushed Nick into the road. Nick fell on his face, in front of a big green car.

People screamed.

But the green car stopped, only inches from Nick's head. The woman in the blue dress ran into the road and pulled Nick to his feet.

'Are you OK? What happened?' she said.

The driver of the green car shouted angrily at Nick, but Nick did not hear him.



Nick fell on his face, in front of a big green car.

'Somebody pushed me,' he said to the woman. 'I didn't fall – somebody pushed me!'

'Pushed you?' said the woman. 'Who? I didn't see anybody.'

Nick looked at the faces of the people near him, but he didn't know them.

Then he saw a man's back. The man was tall and thin, and had very short white hair. He walked quickly away down the street, and did not look back.

'Hey, you!' Nick shouted. 'Wait!'

But the man did not stop, and he was soon lost in the crowds.

'Did *he* push you?' asked the woman in the blue dress.



'I . . . I don't know,' Nick said.

'Do you know him?' she asked.

'I don't know his name,' Nick said. 'But I know that short white hair. Now where did I see it before?'

The woman began to move away. 'I must get home,' she said. 'Are you OK now?'

'Yeah, I'm OK,' Nick said. 'And thanks. Thanks for your help.'

'That's OK.' The woman smiled. 'Be careful now!'

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Back in his hotel, Nick sat on his bed and thought. 'It was an accident. Nobody pushed me, it was an accident. Nobody wants to kill me. And there are hundreds of men in Vancouver with white hair.'

It was one o'clock in the morning, but Nick couldn't sleep. He listened to the cars in the road, and he looked at the night sky through his hotel room window.

Then he sat at the table and tried to write some more of his book about mountains, but he couldn't think about his work. He got back into bed.

There were four or five magazines in the hotel room. They were not very interesting, but Nick sat in bed and opened one . . . and saw a photo of 'Mystery Girl'!

He looked at the picture very carefully. But, yes, it was her! Jan, the girl from the Whistler café.

She was next to a man of about fifty or fifty-five, and



Nick sat in bed and opened one . . . and saw a photo of 'Mystery Girl'!

they were in the garden of a big, expensive house. They smiled at the camera, and they looked very happy.

Canadian millionaire, Howard Hutson, and his daughter, Meg, it said under the picture, at their home in Toronto. Meg Hutson! Not Jan. Not Mystery Girl. Meg Hutson, the daughter of a millionaire! Nick read it again.

'Why did she come and sit with me in the café at Whistler?' he thought. 'Millionaires' daughters don't sit