

The young man looked at the picture. 'Oh, right. You mean Howard Hutson's daughter,' he said. 'She's not staying here, but I saw her ten or fifteen minutes ago. She was with somebody – a man. He asked me about the tea room.'

'The tea room?' said Nick. 'Where's that?'

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The man with short white hair was tired. He couldn't sleep and he couldn't eat. He thought about only one thing, all the time. He drove and he watched, and he waited and he followed.

When he drove into Victoria, the streets were busy, and suddenly he lost the blue car in front of him. Angrily, he drove around the city, past all the big hotels. 'I must find him,' he said. 'I must do it. Today.'

Then he saw the Empress Hotel, and in the street outside it, a blue car.

He drove past the hotel, left his car, and ran back down the street. He went across the road and walked past the downstairs windows. There was a big room with tables and chairs, and a lot of people. He looked carefully at all the faces.

'There she is!' he said suddenly.

There were two men with the girl. He couldn't see their faces, only the backs of their heads, but one of the men was in a green shirt.

'Mr Hollywood,' the man said, and smiled. 'Goodbye, Mr Hollywood.' People in the street turned to look at him, but the man did not see them.

He walked up to the doors of the hotel and put a hand into his pocket. Inside, the gun was cold and hard.

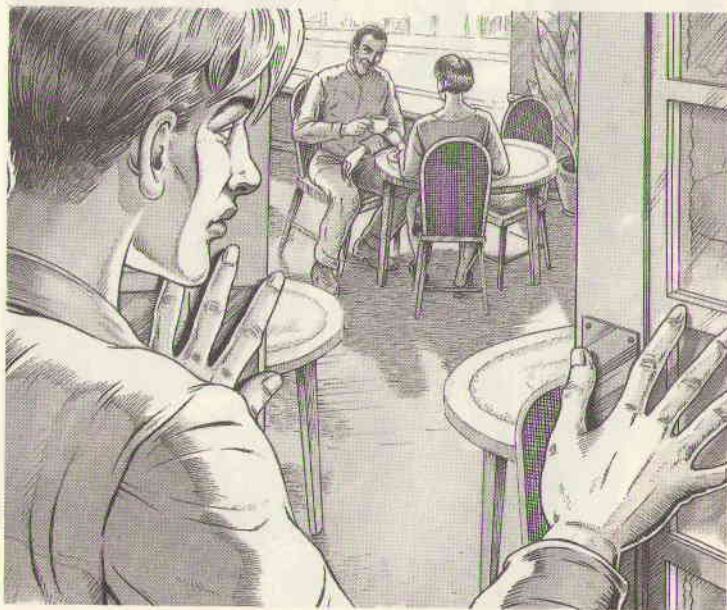


'Goodbye, Mr Hollywood.'

A tea party

Nick looked through the doors of the tea room in the Empress Hotel.

Meg Hutson sat at a table with a man. The man was about thirty, or maybe a year or two younger. He was tall, and brown from the sun. He wore a white shirt, white



Meg Hutson sat at a table with a man.

trousers, and white shoes. He said something to Meg, and she laughed. She looked very happy.

A waiter came up to Nick. 'Can I get you some tea?' he asked.

'No, thanks,' said Nick. 'I'm with the two people over there.' And he walked across to Meg's table.

'Hello, Mystery Girl,' said Nick. 'Remember me? We met at Whistler. Your name was Jan then. But maybe today it's Meg Hutson.'

Meg Hutson looked up at him. 'Oh,' she said, and her face went red.

'Who is this, Meg?' asked the man.

'This is Nick,' said Meg. 'He's a writer. Nick, this is Craig Winters.'

'Sometimes called Mr Hollywood?' said Nick.

'Maybe. But how did *you* know that?' asked Craig Winters.

'I guessed,' said Nick. 'And I think I'm beginning to understand. Can I ask you a question, Mr Winters? Does somebody want to kill you?'

Craig Winters' face went white. 'Kill me?'

'What are you talking about?' asked Meg.

'Before I tell you, answer this question, please,' said Nick. 'You called *me* Mr Hollywood in Whistler. And you wanted the man at the next table, the man with white hair, to hear you. Is that right?'



'I wanted him to follow you, and not me.'

Meg Hutson did not answer at first. Then she said quietly, 'Yes.'

'Why?' asked Nick.

'I wanted him to follow you, and not me.'

'Why?' Nick asked again.

'I think he's a detective,' said Meg. 'And I think he's working for my father. I saw him soon after I left Toronto. He followed me.' Meg put her hand on Craig Winters' arm.

'My father doesn't like Craig. A month ago, he told me not to see Craig again. I'm not happy, and he knows that. I think he guessed that I'm meeting Craig. And now he wants to find Craig and stop him seeing me.'

'Stop him?' said Nick. 'Or kill him?'

'No!' Meg Hutson said. 'Daddy doesn't—'

'The man with white hair pushed me in front of a car in Vancouver,' Nick told her. 'And he shot at me in Stanley Park.'

'What!' said Meg.

'Tell – tell me about this man with white hair,' Winters said suddenly.

Nick looked at him. 'He's about sixty, and he's tall and thin,' he said.

'Do you know his name?' asked Winters.

'Vickers,' said Nick.

Craig Winters suddenly looked ill. 'Did he – did he follow you to Victoria? Did he follow you here?'

'I don't know,' said Nick. He watched Winters. 'You're afraid of him. Why? Why does this man Vickers want to kill you, Winters?'

Before Craig Winters could answer, Meg's face went white. 'Oh, no!' she said. 'Look! Look over there, by the door!'

Nick and Craig Winters turned to look. At the door of the tea room stood the man with white hair. He looked up