

names?' She turned away to answer a telephone call.

Nick walked away from the desk.

'A drink,' he thought. 'I need a drink.' He went into the hotel bar, got a drink and sat down at a table.

'So what do I do now?' he thought.

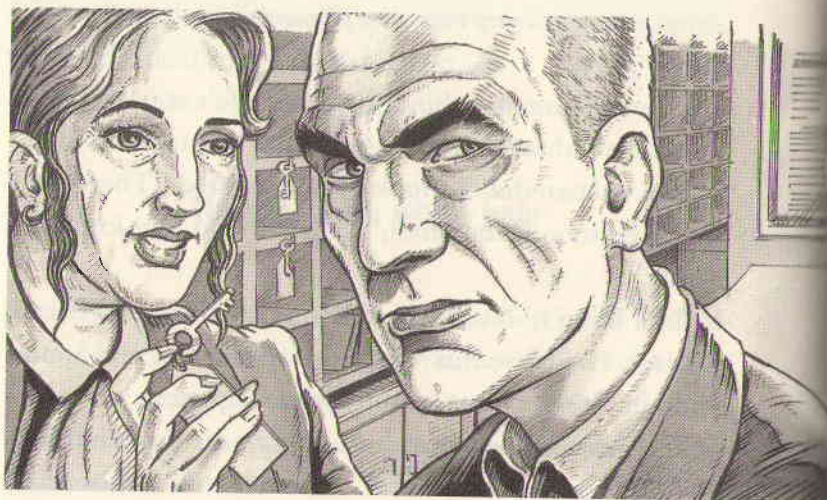
And then he remembered something. A letter in the girl's half-open bag in the Whistler café.

*... and we can meet at the Empress Hotel, Victoria, Vancouver Island, on Friday afternoon ...*

And tomorrow was Friday.

'I'm going to Victoria, on Vancouver Island!' he thought. 'To the Empress Hotel!'

\* \* \*



*The boy and Nick fell down on the floor.*

Nick had dinner in the hotel that evening. He finished eating and got up from his table . . . *and saw the man with white hair.*

Nick moved quickly. The man was at the hotel desk. Nick could see the white head above the other heads near the desk.

'Excuse me!' said Nick. He pushed past the people in the hotel restaurant. A small boy ran in front of him and Nick ran into him. The boy and Nick fell down on the floor. The boy began to cry.

'Hey!' said a woman behind Nick.

'I'm very sorry!' said Nick. He got up and helped the



boy to his feet. 'Are you OK?' he asked the boy.

'Be more careful next time,' said the woman.

Nick moved away quickly, but when he looked back at the hotel desk, he couldn't see the man with white hair. He pushed through the crowd of people.

'That man!' he shouted at the woman behind the desk. 'That man with short white hair. Where did he go?'

The woman looked at Nick. 'Mr Vickers?' she said. 'I don't know.'

'Vickers? Is that his name?' said Nick. 'What's his room number?'

'I'm sorry, I can't tell you that,' the woman said.

'But I need to—' began Nick.

The woman turned away to answer the telephone.

After a second or two, Nick went upstairs to his room.

'Vickers,' he thought. 'Does Meg Hutson know Mr Vickers? I need some answers, and I need them quickly!'

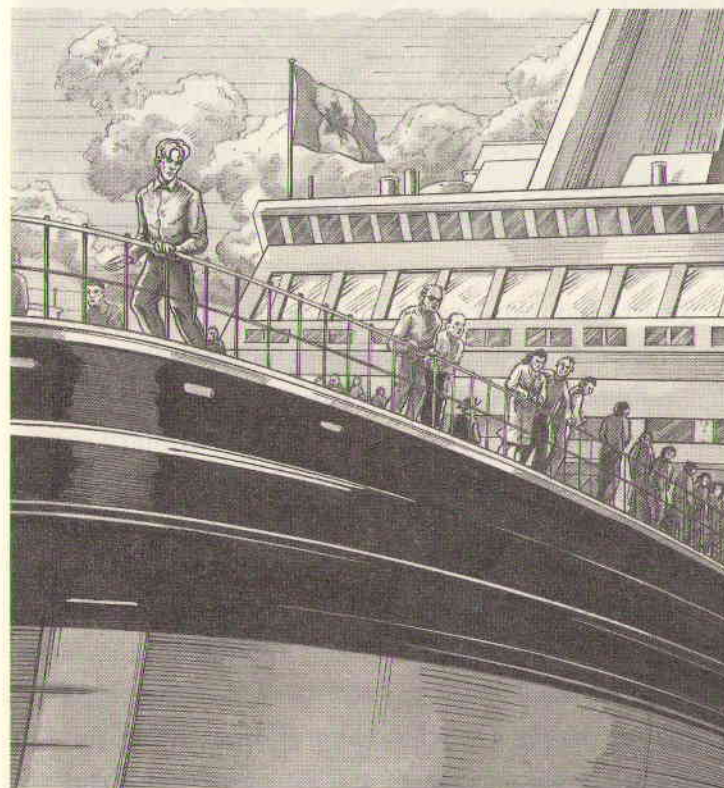
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## Vancouver Island

Tsawwassen was about twenty-three miles south of Vancouver. Nick drove there in his car the next morning for the one o'clock ferry to Vancouver Island. Every five minutes, he looked behind him. The road was busy – black

cars, white cars, red cars, green cars. Maybe Vickers was in one of them.

At Tsawwassen Nick drove his car on to the ferry. There were a lot of cars and crowds of people. Nick got out of his car and walked up and down the ship. He looked for a man with white hair but he didn't see one.



*He looked for a man with white hair but he didn't see one.*



Soon the ferry began to move and Nick felt better. He found the ferry restaurant and got something to eat. More people came in. Nick looked at the faces of all the older men. Some had hats on, so he looked for somebody tall and thin, but there was nobody.

'Maybe he's not on the ferry,' Nick thought. 'Maybe he's back in Vancouver.'

Later, Nick walked around the ship again. Once, he thought he saw the man with white hair in the crowds, but he could not be sure.

Ninety minutes after leaving Tsawwassen, the ferry arrived at Swartz Bay on Vancouver Island, and Nick went back down to his car.

Swartz Bay was twenty miles north of Victoria. Nick drove quickly, and again, looked behind him every four or five minutes. Once, he saw a red car about two hundred yards behind him.

'Did I see that car on the road from Vancouver to Tsawwassen?' he thought.

He drove more slowly, but the red car still stayed two hundred yards behind him, and Nick couldn't see the driver's face or hair.

Soon he was in the busy streets of Victoria, and Nick didn't see the red car behind him again.

Victoria was a city of gardens and beautiful old buildings. Nick liked Victoria very much, but today he



*'This is her.'*

wasn't interested in gardens or buildings.

He found the Empress Hotel, went inside and walked across to the desk.

'Can I help you?' a young man asked Nick.

'I'm meeting a friend here this afternoon,' said Nick. 'Miss Hutson.'

'Hutson?' said the young man. 'Wait a minute.' He went away and came back. 'Sorry, but there's no Miss Hutson staying here.'

Nick took something from his pocket. It was the photograph of Meg and her father, from the magazine. 'This is her,' he said.