

A  
DEADLY  
UNION

BY  
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CHAPTER ONE

DOWN AND OUT

Like any other down and out, Clarence Dewitt had had enough of the system that was supposedly there to help he and others like him to live at a level to be able to keep himself fed and housed and at least moderately comfortable. That was in theory a good way to start on the way towards finding a job and commencing the long climb back up the ladder to self esteem and success, but not so, Clarence.

His main aim in life was to simply get by with as little effort as possible. The rewards of this way of life are few and far between and moderate to say the very least as he was finding out. He lived in a run down old apartment building which looked as if a bomb had fallen on it from a great height. The outside was red brick with large arched windows most of which were broken and there were sacks hung on the inside of them to keep out the cold southerly winds and rain.

There were about sixty other apartments in the building all of which contained people with the same plight as Clarence out of a job and nothing to occupy their every thought but the chance of someday getting the big break and getting away from the filth and hopelessness of the whole situation.

Clarence was twenty six and a half, the half being probably the most accurate guide to his commonsense and general intelligence. His eyes of blue lured the women. They come in droves and left just as quickly when they discovered their money, easy to steal valuables, and of course Clarence had gone.

Supposedly, blonde hair was an advantage, if washed and styled but noone had told him that at least if they had he wasn't listening to them when they did. Add to this to six feet of ragged clothes and you have a good picture of Clarence Dewitt.

Six oclock Monday morning, after being drunk all weekend, is not the way to ensure a good week or even a glimpse of the first rung of the ladder to which he aspires,

especially when you look like a squashed cow pat and feel twice as bad. Nevertheless, this is the time designated for all who have even the slightest intention of getting out of bed, putting both feet on the floor and taking the world by the shoulders to take the first step on the way up.

All this is very fine for some, but for Clarence forget it. His butt as usual stays firmly rooted in his bed. At noon today as always, he might decide to get his tired bones going. Mainly because it's raining cats and dogs and being only sixty five degrees it is as if winter is here. It is in fact the summer, and it's only that his bedroom like the rest of his grotty little apartment is such a pig-sty. There are beer cans and several weeks of dirty dishes heaped up in the sink, hardly surprising coming home drunk every night and falling into bed without having to worry about a single thing because of the fact of his living alone. There is no electricity in the place and the hot water is cold however there are less bills that way.

But the problem was this, no money, nothing but old dirty, ragged clothes to wear, a car was totally out of the question and his grubby little hovel was the pits. All this adds up to a big fat zero, not a good way to impress anybody. Imagine showing up to ask for work like this when the guy next to you is in a suit and tie. It would make you look like an utter arsehole. Since it was too cold for him to get out of bed, he was giving it much thought and after several hours, he had come to the conclusion that what he had to do was break free, to form a new lifestyle, but there was just one thing standing in his way. MONEY. He needed heaps of it and fast. He knew it was hopeless to try and keep anything back out of his dole check because he only got ninety for dollars each week and although he was drunk every night, it was paid for by well meaning pals of his. All of his money was used to pay for the rent and that little food he bought this was not a way to live a comfortable life, let alone save anything. He was rapidly becoming disheartened about the whole idea.

"It's as if you are not meant to be anything in life", he thought to himself

"there are the hav's and the have nots, and I'm going to be a have if its the last thing I do".

He thought a while longer and came up with an answer not the best one but it seemed to be the only way out of his dilemma, he would no longer just take all the kicks in the guts, but would accept what the world hands out to him and take what it tries to hold back.

It may be a novel philosophy, but it obviously meant that there would be some form of illegality involved this would later prove to be the case almost entirely as his tale unfolds.

It is about three P.M two days later, on a quiet suburban street in an upmarket part of town. Here people have hyphenated names, and have matching Mercedes in the rose lined driveways of their two storeyed half million dollar townhouses and Clarence looked like a cat in a dog kennel. He had thought of how good it would be to have just a little of what these kind of people own, things that they take for granted every day of the week, and wouldnt miss if they tried to find it and couldnt. That thought gave him the idea of how he could get money to get himself started.

"Steal some of your little items you bastards, you want even notice them missing. Just go out and buy some more no doubt. Well up yours, I'm going to help myself", he said with a sarcastic smile.

It may be a bit different way to start out at what may be a new career, but for someone like Clarence it would seem like the only way out at the time. It would be easy to take a few things to a fence or a pawn shop to sell and make a bit of money that way. Thats if nothing went wrong.

One thing was sure, there was plenty of money here and all he had to do was take it, his big chance was in sight at last. The question was how?.

Standing at the corner and looking around to make sure that noone was taking any notice of him. He decided to find some way to hide his face just in case someone saw him and could give a description if the police were called or an alarm went off.

It was obviously out of the question to buy some sunglasses or a balaclava, so it was a matter of doing the best you could and seeing just what would turn up. He had decided to give it away for the day when the sight of two passing cyclists gave him an idea. They were wearing shaded glasses and sun hats, it was as if he were given a concession from the powers that be. The two unsuspecting guys cruising along on their 10 speeds, one red and one blue, were completely unaware of what was about to literally befall them as Clarence began his strategy and prepared to go into battle.

Standing back to the road, Clarence waited for the right moment as the cyclists approached he thought "This is it, I hope it doesn't hurt too much". The cycles were six feet from him when he stepped out into the road right into the path of the hapless riders. All hell broke loose as bike and rider came crashing down onto the road in a flurry of arms and legs and two seconds later Clarence is gone with a hat and shades stuffed in his coat pocket. The two riders dazed and confused by all this don't notice him or their gear gone. By now Clarence, feeling chuffed about his success, felt that nothing could go wrong and all in all he had done well to come out of it unhurt, albeit slightly shaken that is until he noticed a familiar and unwelcome shape on the horizon. It was a police car and it looked as if they had seen the whole thing. They hadn't, they were in the area on patrol, it could be a bit risky to do anything while they were about so he ducked into a sidestreet to avoid attracting their attention. which would normally be alright except for the fact that it would be easy to spot a scumbag like him in a plush part of town, which, as he preferred to remain anonymous could prove to be awkward.

By now the police car had come across the two bewildered cyclists and on hearing their tale of woe and suffering, excused themselves and went off to look for the perpetrator of this heinous crime. Not a word was uttered about the missing items of clothing.

After a few passes of the car it went off in another direction not finding what they were looking for, which

made him very happy as he breathed a sigh of relief.

"That was close, too many of those will give me a heart attack", he thought. No matter how close it had been.

Clarence thought it was a step in the right direction and so he gathered his thoughts and set about the task at hand.

With the time at around three forty five P.M. he knew that folks would be arriving home and that gave him little time to do anything which would bring the money to which he thought he was richly deserving of. No matter what he intended to get a good start in all this, so, donning his disguise artfully acquired, he sauntered casually off around the neighbourhood searching for anything suggesting easy pickings. A few minutes later he had found what he was probably looking for, probably meaning that since he was new at this, it was not clear if it would be a good target or not, it wasn't worth the risk he'd have to be sure of his ground before diving into something that he might regret later. He knew that there are certain things you must do to secure your home from would be thieves, he'd remembered this from his school days when the local cop visited his classroom. He said that a burglar looked for tell tale signs like an open window in a house with an empty garage or entrances windows or doors obscured from view in fact any sign of easy entry in a house that is obviously empty.

"Handy things those lectures, now I know just what to look for", he thought.

It was still a bit difficult to tell exactly as there were either people at home next door or others who were in a position to see every move he made, or the places were alarmed to the hilt. Being that Clarence was a bit impatient it occurred to him to do a quick "hit & run", maybe his luck would hold out and he would get away clean one thing he knew was that time was running out and fast and a really big job could wait until later. At least a few bucks is better than nothing. At any rate he'd probably get pissed and forget the whole damned thing anyway. A welcome apparition greeted his wary eye, it was that of a large white mexican style house with bright red wavy

tiles and four large white arches on the front wall the full height of the first floor, the windows behind them and the ones on the first floor which were enormous panoramic type ones were all tinted black, the type that he had seen in the dole office and you were only able to see out of one side of them. The other side was like a blackish mirror. It was like having no windows at all because of the inability to see in from the exterior of the building.

Beneath the house was a double garage with two white arches on the front that level was in a sunken courtyard with rustic coloured cobblestones leading out to the tall wrought iron gates sepeated the house from the street.

It was lovely vision to behold. He stood there gazing in awe until his eyes fell on an unbelievable sight. The fools had left the garage door wide open revealing the fact that theyhad gone out, well at least it looked that way due to the absence of a car in the huge space which you would be able to hold a party in with about fifty guests, and still have plenty of room. It was sitting there longing for somebody to go in and visit so now having a newley educated eye for the main chance it was high time he took the inititive and went for broke.

All this he had been seen through the hedged fence on the street and although visible by him was not visible to others who may be looking in that general direction because he was right at the hedge line and the vegetation was as a wall from a distance. A perfect target in anybody's language. As the fence was a hedge he thought it would be easy to climb through. That was not the way it was to be. It was grown about a steel wire mesh of a heavy gauge to stop any possible breaches by persons of a devious nature for whatever reasons they have. Standing a good eight feet high, it seemed as if it was twenty feet, however where here is a will there is a way and it wasnt long before Clarence was over the top and inside.

Gambling that there was no-one there who would see him he moved hurriedly to the open garage doors not noticing the differences in the ground levels causing him to drop three feet to the courtyard and landing flat on

his face, it was now possible for him to see clearly , right into the gaping openings of the garage. There was a small stairway leading up into the heart of the house.

There was a door way at the top of the stairs.

"Jesus, the stupid bastards have left it open. They bloody well deserve to be ripped off. They could also be home. I'll need to be carefull just in case".

It should have been apparent to him that he had made such a cock up getting into the place that had anyone been in there they could not possibly have missed his approach especially as he lay spread eagled on his face in the driveway, still, he had to be safety minded after all. Stealthy is healthy, well that was his sentiment anyway.

The time was here, it was death or glory.

Getting into the garage was as easy as falling off a log. He simply walked in. There was nothing else on his mind but getting into the house and seeing what was worth taking. Since there was nothing in the garage to speak of to make his efforts pay off. He began the climb to the top of the stairs keeping his eyes and ears open to any sight or sound that would give away a presence in the building forcing him to flee the scene and waste a days work.

No such sight or sound come, and he found himself climbing red carpeted stairs, into the high ceilinged hallway of this fabulous mansion. On reaching the top he stood staring at the resplendent glory of this extreme flirtation of wealth intended to impress all who entered here. It certainly did that to Clarence, he almost forgot where he was and why he was there. Luckily he pulled himself together and pondering for a moment, he stuck his head around the corner and peeked at all that was around him to select a suitable place to start on a potential shopping spree. He stepped out from his posie, when he was sure that there was no-one there and saw that in the hallway in which he was now standing open the others were shut firmly, filled with solid oak doors that were as the ones you would expect to find in a two hundred year old house or municipal building. Slowly he make his way towards the first of them. It was only six or seven feet away from there he was standing. Shaving in anticipation

he reached for the large gold plated knob and turned it slowly. It was not easy to turn being so large but he felt the lock open and the door move slightly. He pushed it open. There was nothing in the room but a bunch of old expensive looking furniture, probably antique. He looked around the room but there was nothing, on inspection, the other rooms on the ground floor revealed the same sort of thing. Plenty of big things and nothing portable or of any good to his cause.

He headed for the stairs leading to the first floor. They were red carpeted like the ones from the garage. They were straight and as he went up he saw that they came out into another long hallway. Off each side of this ten doorways jutted out with their bronze coloured ornate surrounds embossed from the beige anaglypta wallpaper. This was the last chance to make a snatch from here before the owners came home from where ever they were.

Up there were stereos tv's and videos. They were all over the place as you would expect to find in a house of this quality but that was no use to him. Now was he to get them out and off to sell them.

This was all very depressing for him. There werent any little thing. He was about to give up and leave but decided to have a look at the last bedroom. Finding nothing he turned around to go and his eyes fell on a small shape beneath the bed. Bending down to look more closely at it he found it to be a small brown briefcase. His heart began to pound. Could this be what he was looking for? He grabbed it and pulled it from its hiding place under the bed. he sat it on a nearby chair to open it. The problem was that it was locked up tight with a combination lock on each side of its face.

"Oh shit I havent got a thing to open it with", he thought on deliberation he decided to back to the garage, after all that is where you are most likely to find tools, so off he went to see what he could find to do the job.

He had already been inside for a half an hour and was pushing his luck the longer that he remained there. It took him only a few seconds to get back down to the place through which he had come. There was one good sign though,

there were all the tools imaginable hanging on the wall in an orderly fashion, against the backdrop of a shadowboard. "A place for everything and everything in its place", he thought "it must be nice to be some people, I cant even afford a screwdriver".

There was no room between the hasp and the lock to insert a screwdriver or a knife, so it was obvious that it needed a cold chisel or something similar. As there was no sign of a cold chisel, the next best thing was a wood chisel. He grasped it from the rack and placed it under the hasp. He then picked a hammer from the rack an engineers hammer, aimed it at the end of the chisel and struck it as hard as he could. It didnt do anything but glance of the edge of the lock with a loud "CLINK". This telltale sound being swallowed up by the enormity of the garage. Time and time again he struck it untill the lock could no longer stand the pounding and stood open, Like a soldier to attention, tossing small metal parts high into the air like many little guns firing in unison, half of the battle was won and it was only a matter of a few more seconds before the other lock with him using the same procedure, was also open. The next thing was to open it up and have a look at the fruits of his labour, be they good or bad.

"I hope this is worth the mucking about, I wonder whats in there. Diamonds, jewelery, maybe even money. Well theres only one way to find out. Open it!" he thought. By now his imagination was running rampant with thoughts of unheard of wealth. What was in the bag? He opened it up almost too afraid to do so. Slowly the lid lifted higher and higher and higher until he stood face to face with what could be his ticket. There was money in there. Not just a bit but more t an Clarence had ever seen anywhere else exdept at the movies.

"There must be at least a thousand dollars and there is an envelope, a large yellow one, I wonder whats in there". he said groping for the shining packet. On inspection, compromising photographs, showing two people. A man, who looked very well off and a very young woman, engaging in explicit sexual activity.

"Shit Im onto something here, better piss off while I can someone is sure to be home soon" he said to himself grabbing up the briefcase and making a dash for the fence. Before hopping the fence again, he stuffed the case under his dirty old jacket and secured it with his belt to his body. If he had to make a run for it, it would not fall out and make him lose all that he had succeeded in thus far.

It was by this time well after four he was over the top and away onto the street and headed in the direction of home which was some way off.

"What a dope I am". he said to himself,

"Why walk when you can take a cab!.

With this thought he ducked into an alley took off the belt holding the briefcase and opened it up. Reaching inside he took out one hundred dollars in twentys, replaced the bag and resecured it to his person, stuffed the money in his pocket and went off in search of a taxi cab. A little while later he was to find what he was looking for, a yellow cab sitting at the curb waiting for a fare.

Clarence walked quickly over to it and went to get in. The driver, thinking that he was just a bum, said "Hey you, get lost, bums like you aint got any bread. Beat it pal".

At this Clarence hoisted the twentys out of his pocket and waved them under the drivers nose.

"Aint got no money eh PAL". he snapped.

"Just take me to the Central Bus depot."

This was a surprise to the cabbie. A bum with money and it wasnt even dole day.

"Yo". said the cabbie "Who cares how he got it, a fare is a fare".

He pulled the Chevy cab out onto the street and off towards the bus station.

This was a quick turn of events for him, one minute a bum the next he was well off . There was still no call for complacency. He was not home yet and getting there without being seen by others to be suspicious in any way. He had already figured out that his having taken a cab could result in his identification later. Should it be linked with the burglary when it was reported to the police on the discovery of the crime by the owners of the house which he had robbed, however, how did at least keep on , the makeshift

disguise that he acquired at the beginning of this escapade which would at least make it more difficult for his exact facial features to be describable by any witness.

A while later, after a trip of some thirty minutes or so, the cab pulled into the bus station took a fare of nine dollars from Clarence and drove off to a nearby taxi stand to await his next fare. Clarence then headed for the nearest railway tube station, which was only a matter of two minutes away and descended the concrete stairs to the crowded subway platform to await the train to downtown New York. The wait was not very long only a few minutes although it seemed like hours as though all there at the station knew what he had done and were showing their disapproval with a menacing frown before turning away. Clarence was just a little bit paranoid over the whole thing, the people weren't looking at him at all merely trying to see if the train was coming in or not as people do.

The train arrived and he got on quickly and made his way to the rear coach of the commuter train. Apart from an old woman in a floppy brimmed red sunhat and short blue coat and a member of the raincoat brigade, that is to say a sleazy old man with long greasy hair and matching moustache dressed in a very long raincoat and probably nothing else. He thought of what he must look like to others who found it necessary to look in his direction. He smiled for a moment on imagining what he was going to do to alter his image. The clothes, jewelery and if there was enough money to buy a car he would get the most expensive one that he could afford. A shock was awaiting him as to the amount of money that he would find inside the bag when he got home and counted it. One thing was certain though, there was going to be at least two thousand dollars in there and that would last him for a little while until he had to back out and get some more. At least that's what he thought. He was becoming very nervous, all he wanted to do was to get home and count his ill gotten gains, preferably without getting mugged on the way, mind you it was not very likely that a mugger would turn his attention to a bum like him and in that fact alone he found some relief. Not knowing just what was in the bag in

terms made him all the more anxious to find out.

With a squeal and a jerk the train pulled out of the station accelerating to full speed in only a matter of seconds. He couldn't help noticing the two others in the compartment staring seemingly at him however, there is little else to do while riding the subway as he soon realised and although it made him a bit nervous it wasn't half as bad as the spectre looming on the horizon. A blue uniformed man walking from car to car stopping briefly at each passenger as if searching for a particular person. Clarence's heart was pounding. Had the police followed him onto the train? would they see him and arrest him? He would be put in jail if he was caught and he couldn't stave off the thought of that. The figure came closer and closer, he couldn't see it clearly because of the slightly frosted glass between the cars. Closer and closer it came, harder and harder his heart pounded until it was in the next compartment to his. He just about had a heart attack when the horizontal handle of the car door moved slowly downwards and the door began to open. And open it did reveal the six feet two inch subway train inspector.

"Tickets please no free rides on my train" he snapped. He went first to the old woman who quickly showed her ticket before snatching them away again and putting them back in her pocket. The sleepy old codger followed suit then it was Clarence's turn. He had not bought a ticket and was wondering what to do when at last the train arrived at the centre of town which is where Clarence wanted to go. As the double doors swung open he made a bee-line for them to escape from that seely confined box on wheels that had made him feel so uncomfortable. He wondered how people could use that means of transport each day and not seem too worried about it after all, it had been many years since he had ridden the subway, and it seemed to him to be so different now to those times.

"Not so fast pal" shouted the inspector "Where's your ticket". Clarence thought quickly, he knew that he couldn't afford to arouse any suspicions in the inspector, he had a lot to hide and was not about to compromise all by making a stupid mistake right now like, running for it, if he did and was caught the results would be disastrous.

"sorry mate, I didnt have time to buy one", said Clarence pulling out a ten dollar bill from his jacket pocket and handing it to the inspector. "This should about cover it". "Yeah, that will do it". replied the inspector, turning away and walking towards the other car. That had been a close call. Clarence was on a roll and it appeared that he was going to make it. Make it, where should he go , It was not a good idea to return to his grotty little apartment on Thirty first Street, with that thought in his mind he stepped off the train and made his way to the street above him. The question now was where to go. As he had thought beforehand, it was too dangerous to go back to his apartment, anyway, he hadnt left anything of his there that he owned he was wearing and no-one would miss him if he didnt go home.

Climbing the steps to the street and walking out into the crowded sidewalk he made his way to the heart of the city. The first thing he did was to go to a mission store and buy a set of tidy looking clothes. He could have bought new ones but it would have seemed odd to any bystander that a guy like him should be able to find the money to do this. He bought a pale yellow shirt and white tie and a pair of beige trousers together with a pair of grey shoes that he found in the large tea chest that they kept the second hand shoes in made up a rough but effective new look for Clarence. He took all the items to the counter where an elderly motherly woman took them from him placed them in a large brown paper bag and handed them to him. "That will be six dollars even", she said with a smile He handed her a twenty and she handed him fourteen dollars change. He turned and walked out the door.

Time was passing pretty quickly now. It was about seven thirty. He was thinking of his next move. Trying to get over the speed that everything had happened and how well it had turned out. He had money clothes and now a place to stay was his next priority. There were plenty of rooms around anyone would do for the moment. All he wanted was place to count his money and lay his head for the night. The most important thing at the moment was the need to eat. There were many burger joints in the street he went into the first one that he came across.

CHAPTER TWO

BURGERS  
AND  
BOARDING  
HOUSES

AT Big Eddies . He ordered a giant burger, fries and a chocolate malt to go. All of that came to four seventy. He paid the money took his food and left. The food was what he usually had when he had had the money to buy it. Although it was nothing much, he wasn't used to eating a lot and it satisfied him greatly, fulfilling the inner man. As for the chocolate malt, it was purely a whim, one of those lovely sloppy delightful beauties had not tantalised his tastebuds in a long time,

"Pure luxury and there is going to be much much more where that came from". he said to himself. Since the bag was weighing heavy on his mind, and his feet were tired and hurting he decided that it was time to find a room to rent.

As soon as that thought had occurred to him, he saw a sign that read "Bed and Breakfast 5.00 a Night". It was on the front of a relatively tidy looking old apartment building. There were eight or nine steps leading up to a wide doorway, the doors were open and there were two old men sitting out in front of the stairs. He went over to the steps and was greeted by one of the old men.

"Looking for a room young feller?". he asked,

"Yes as a matter of fact I am. Where do I find the manager?" Clarence asked.

"You found him buddy". After a short but jovial dialogue a deal was struck and Clarence and the man were headed for the counter to get a key for a room. Number seventeen.

Money and thanks changed hands and the pair went on about their business, the old man to his buddy on the steps and Clarence to find his room. It was on the first floor. He inserted the key, turned it and opened the door. As it was getting dark he groped around by the door to find the light switch. His fingers struck home base. Flicking the small lever and enlightening the narrow confines of his new abode. It was sparsely furnished with a made up bed against the wall on his left, with a dresser at the foot of the bed and a window in the wall opposite the door into the room. Behind the door there was a blue armchair and the floor was covered in well worn brown carpet. It was tidy enough and it would do the job for a night or two.

He stepped in shut and locked the door and pulled the curtains across the window to deter any sight seers from

the building across the street.

At last the time had come to open the briefcase and count the spoils. This was the time that he had been waiting for in eager anticipation, Just how much money was there in that bag?. Rechecking the door and window to make sure that they were locked, he opened up his coat and released the belt holding the briefcase sending it on to the bed, spilling its contents all over the place. There was money every where, all neatly made up in little bundles his eyes nearly jumped out of his head. It was all he could do to avoid yelling out in ecstasy, money everywhere. He had never seen so much of it let alone be the one in possession of such a big pile of it. He proceeded to scoop all of the money up into a pile in the middle of the bed and when he had done this he moved the briefcase onto the floor and commenced counting the loot. He counted the first bundle and found that it added up to five thousand, he then added the amount of bundles which was twenty in all ending up with a total sum of one hundred thousand clams. It took a couple of seconds for the shock to hit him, he could not control himself any longer. He picked up the pillow off his bed and shouted and squealed into it like a stuck pig. Luckily there was noone to hear his shouts of jubilation the other tenants were out on the town because this was Thursday, pay day, and more for some than for others.

After his ecstasy attack was over, and he had returned to the real world, he lifted the mattress and spread the bundles out beneath it, he then lowered the mattress onto him, and sat in the armchair to ponder on what to do with all that money.

It was time for sleep, nearly ten in the evening and he was dog-tired. He slipped wearily out of his rough old tatters and climbed into bed, the first in which he had slept in ages, and it wasn't long before he was sleeping soundly. Any excitement was quashed by the over whelming need of his tired body, for rest through a deep comfortable sleep.

CHAPTER THREE

A NEW START

CHAPTER THREE.

Sun shining through the curtains woke Clarence at seven fifty five the next morning. The events of the day before had eluded him in sleep but now in his waking hours it was time to return to reality, to the real world in which he was about to make his debut in a new life. Scarcely believing what had happened the day before, he jumped out of bed and raised the mattress to see if it was all true or just a dream. The money was all there, just as he had left it the night before and it was no less frightening than it was when he had counted it up the night before.

"What the hell am I going to do with all of that money and where am I going to put it all?" He can't just take it all to a bank and put it in without making someone suspicious". he thought "I need a plan".

What he needed most of all was a shower, he had gone so long without one that he positively reeked, so putting on his old shirt and pants he walked out of the room picking up his bag of new clothes as he went. He shut and locked the door and headed down the corridor to where the bathroom was. There was no one in here so he did not have to wait in line, he went, locking the door after him. Off came his clothes and on went the shower. It took a couple of minutes for the water to warm up enough for him to step in to the spray. It was hot and very refreshing. Soap had been provided for the use of tenants but towels were only small ones of the hand variety they would do at a pinch. Clarence finished his shower and dried off on one of the hand towels and while doing so noticed that he needed a shave. As there were no facilities for this he decided to go out and get one.

"It would be nice to have somebody to shave you", he thought. He dressed himself in his replacement apparel, shortly he returned to his room, let himself in and shut and locked the door. He had left his old clothes in the bathroom and kept the bag from his new ones. Lifting the mattress once again, he took out the money and stuffed it into the bag filling three quarters of its space. It was only in

he had done this that he remembered the photographs up beneath the bed, hastily he bent down and picked them up off the floor and opened the yellow envelope in which they were nestled. There was one large photograph of a guy about sixty. He was engaged in a somewhat bizzarre bondage situation with two young women. There were two other photographs, one of the same man and an older woman, obviously his wife and the other was of the man getting into a limo. It immediately became clear to him that this money was the proceeds of a blackmailer and that since the negative was still in the possession of blackmailer at the time that Clarence had stolen the money along with the photographs and the negatives, the blackmailer had no intention of handing back the negatives and intended to continue to take money off this man. It might seem odd that a man who would rob someone or do a burglary or two could feel sorry for a person in the predicament such as the man in these photos, but Clarence did the first order of business was to destroy the photos and the negatives, he tore them up and put them in his pocket along with the envelope they came in picked up his old jacket, shades and paper bagog of money and headed for the street.

There was no one in the place or at least the ones who had not gone out were still in bed. Clarence had decided not to eat breakfast in the dining room but go straight out and take care of business, he would not be returning.

It was a lovely day, the sun shining and the bustle of the rush hour traffic made him feel at ease. It was his confirmation that all was right with the world he had things to do and places to go. The first place was the nearest bank. Not to deposit money, especially that huge amount, in the usual manner, the last thing that he needed was unfavourable attention from the official quarter. It would probably be safe, as there was not much chance of the money being reported stolen to the police by the blackmailer, however, he was not taking any chances. The nearest bank was the first national bank. It was an enormous pinkish grey building with row upon row of bronze tinted windows. It looked to him as though it were huge looking glass for some giant. as usual, it was about thirty floors or more,

it would have been out of place if it had been any smaller, most of the buildings in this part of town were around this tall, give or take a few floors.

He made his way through the torrent of pedestrian traffic, finally reaching the large revolving glass doors. He went in. There were people standing in queues of six or seven each awaiting his or her turn at the teller to execute whatever business they had. There was an enquiry counter on the left of the tellers and as luck would have it there was no queue there only two bank personell talking between themselves. That seemed to him to be the appropriate place to go.

All of the other counters had tellers behind them who were handling cash transactions. this left only the enquiry counter so it must be the right one. There were only writing tables along the wall to his right and chairs to his left in the centre there was an indoor garden with coleus plants in a bed of red bricks eight or nine high with a lightly guldern varnished wooden rim around the top. The entire foyer was carpeted in a rich gold and red covering, almost too lovely to step on. A person in his social category never got the opportunity to enter an establishment such as this one, consequently, this was a bit of a culture shock for Clarence, it all seemed like a dream, he simply couldnt believe that he was there, the sheer enormity of all of this stunned him temporarily. There was no doubt about it, he was like a fish out of water. It would be harder to get used to this than he could imagine. Collecting his thoughts he strolled over the the counter, trying to appear as normal as possible, under the circumstances that was a hard thing for even he to do, after all he had stolen a large sum of money and it was making him as nervous as hell just knowing that he was carrying it all around. He had been standing and waiting there for a minute or two, when one of the tellers noticed him, ended her conversation with the other one and said to Clarence.

"Can I help you sir?".

"Id like to rent a deposit box if you dont mind", said Clarence.

"For how long" replied the teller.

"Whatever is the usual will be fine thanks"

"We prefer you to rent for one year ,and the charge will be ninty four dollars for that period.If it is a shorter time you require then it will cost you fourteen per month".

"Fine,give me two months worth please"said Clarence.

"Two months it is then"said the teller."Sign here ,and remember tat if you lose the key,it will cost fifty dollars to get a replacement.Your box number is 8350 .thank you ,.have a nice day".

Clarence was told to wait while a guard was called to escort him to the vault area where deposit boxes were held.

The vault was beneath the bank.through a door in the foyer.Clarence was taken ,by the guard,down a flight of steps.They stopped at a large steel door,just like a jail cell door.There was another guard on the other side of the door.His station was on the other side of a sheet of bullet proof glass.The one who was with Clarence gestured to the other ,who came to the door and let us in.There was an electronic buzz,as the door slid along well oiled runners.He was taken along a short corridior to a small room at the end The steel door slammed shut behind him as the guard showed him to his box.It was withdrawn and placed on a table.The guard then left him saying that he should just call when<sup>he</sup> was ready to go.

At last he was alone.He pulled the bag of money from his coat and put it on the small table.Counting out twenty thousand dollars,he put it to one side and placed the rest into the box,slipped his key into the lock and turned it.He put the money off the table into his back pocket and called back the guard.

The box was returned to its place and Clarence was taken back upstairs.A short while later,he emerged outside the bank.The feeling of utter elation was a breath of fresh air.It sent a shiver up and down his spine.He could hardly wait to spend his

ill gotten gain. It was necessary to stop and reflect for a while. He did so at a nearby cafe. It was a small place set back from the hustle and bustle of a busy sidewalk. Walking in, he selected a variety of sandwiches and cakes, and together with a cup of coffee he took them to a table in the corner of this little haven. He sat down and enjoyed the culinary delights set down before him. After some considerable thought, the meaningful swilling of the now cold espresso around his mouth, he came to a decision. He would first go to a clothing store and buy some new clothes to alter his rough exterior. He would then go to a car sales yard to purchase a car. Not just any car, a fast, flashy little number to attract the women, a new wrist watch and somewhere to stay. Another coffee or two and it was time to make tracks. It was not long before he found the first of his needs met, it was a large department store. On entering, he found a staggering array of wares. Everything from a box of matches to a motor scooter and everything in between. He had never seen such a large gathering of products from all over the place in one place before.

He made his way through the tangle of aisles and stands until he came to the department that he wanted. It was hard to choose from the large range of suits, casuals, shoes and jackets on display, so after trying on several, he decided to buy one of each item on display. He left the store moments later with a large bundle under each arm. The next thing was to find a car dealer and buy a car. There were many of those around but it took a while to find just what he wanted. A large, shiny black Trans Am. How it gleamed and shone in the mid morning sun. It was perfect. Clarence paid the cash over and drove away. This car was just like the one he stole and took for a joyride. He really wanted this one. Now it was his.

As if a new force had taken over his every thought, he realised that he could just as slip back into the gutter from which he had risen only a few short days ago. That would be the last thought on anyones mind at a time like this. Clarence had known what it was like to be on skid row without a hope in hell of getting out of it .He remembered what it was like to go without food to pay the rent ,picking up stogies out of the gutter to smoke because he had no other way of getting a ciggarette. He certainly couldn't buy them ,after all ,if you can't afford food then you can't afford smokes. Simply a matter of prioritys.

A few days ago he was doing all this .Today he was in a car of his own with plenty of money heaps of new clothing and looking for a luxury motor hotel in which to reflect upon his thoughts.

It was nearly two o'clock in the afternoon when he came across a lavish looking place at the edge of town.

"This is as good as anything", he thought to himself. It was a BEST WESTERN outpost hotel, and by the look of the cars parked outside in the parking lot it was an establishment for the better class of clientele. Installing his own car in the lot ,he went inside and rented a room which at \$125.00 per night proved his thoughts correct. The key was handed to him on a tray and a bell hop was assigned to carry his two packages to his room. Once inside ,he took his packages and handed a tip of ten dollars to the bellhop.

He lay on his bed for a moment to catch his breath, then sat up, looked at his two bundles of newly aquired apparell and smiled to himself.

"This is it ". he said to himself. "I've bloody well made it ",;

As it was well past his lunch time, he decided to go down to the dining room and get a bite eat. Why not? He could well afford it.

The dining room was on the ground floor of this three storey building. He went down the elevator .It was a lot faster than ascending the stairs. As he was now dressed up in swish attire, he felt quite at home amongst the clearly upper class people in the establishment. As expected, the dining room was a large, high ceilinged place with woodgrain ,highly polishes of course , and plant life abounding. There were small alcoves all around the walls, with U shaped seating covered in purple velvet. Small square tables sat in the centre of these. Clarence took his pick and sat down awaiting service from one of the many waiters scooting about the place. Service was rapid and it was not long before he was munching on a thick T. bone steak with all of the trimmings and gazing at the art Nouveau which was scattered all around the walls of this flamboyant eating spot.

All three courses over, he decided to go out on the town. There were many places to go to at night if your desire was to have a good time. His desire was to see a movie, so off he went in search of a good title. Cruising around town was the last thing on his mind at that time but as the raunchy Trans Am fired into life, he got the urge to do just that. A quick reverse out of his parking spot and the machine launched itself out into the night with wheels spinning leaving clouds of thick smoke and the smell of burning rubber in the ~~air~~. Even  
 quit

The feel of the whole thing was right for him. He felt lucky, lucky enough to win himself a whole stack on a one armed bandit, or a game of chance like craps or somesuch. He felt like a winner, as if there was not a thing in the whole wide world that could stand in his way at all. The Trans Am was roaring, turning heads as such a car would tend to do. He was on top of the pile, the main man. And a main man needs a classy woman, not necessarily a broad to write home about, or introduce to mother dearest. There was no shortage of this type of broad, after all, this was sin city, you can have anything your desire as long as you have the cash to procure it. It had been a very long time since he had been lucky enough to score a lay, be it a one nighter or otherwise and it was begging to show. He had to do something about it. He did.

He found it a quick procedure in this part of town, a flash of cash was all it took to get an instant lover. Sheila. Blonde, beautiful and a perfect figure, 36, 24, 34 of course, not to mention an adoration for fast cars and money, heaps of it. Clarence was in his glory, all these classy bits and pieces and more money to buy more when that which he had, ran out and that happens sooner than you think when you have so much that you don't know what to do with it all.

Picking up Sheila was easy, she picked him up really, He had pulled in to a bar to get a beer, and was spotted by her. She went over to his car, he rolled down the window and said,

"Hi, you looking for a good time, I've got dollars in my pocket and go juice in the tank, what do you say darlin?"

"I say how do I know your'e not some kind of weirdo" she replied

"You don't" replied Clarence "You'll just have to take my word for it

So she did and hopped into the car

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All that evening, he found it impossible to keep his eyes off this voluptuous little raver, and after taking in a movie, they decided to go back to her place for a few drinks and whatever followed.

That was just what Clarence wanted. In his mind there were thoughts of making love wildly with this broad and then dumping her flat on her ass, never to return. It wasn't that late, but he decided to go to her place anyway. However, it did seem a bit odd that she was so keen to go along with the idea, Clarence had expected at least some opposition to the plan after all she knew he had plenty of cash -h, most would prefer to stay out and live it up till the money is all gone. A couple of minutes later, they were heading up Ashton road, the motor of the Trans Am rumbling to the sound of Rock Around The Clock on the car stereo. with the announcer on the radio telling all, the time "This is your radio station 93 xlk coming to you in FM at ten kilowatts and it's coming up to eight forty on the studio clock on this lovely summer night. Speaking of Summer here's Donna Sommer and "I FEEL LOVE" ", then the music began.

About half way through the song Sheila wanted to stop at a rest room to freshen up so Clarence obliged and pulled into a nearby gas station. Sheila got out and went into the ladies rest room. There had not been much said between the two all that evening that had not been in connection with money or assets of one kind or another, it didn't seem too important to him at the time because he had intended to simply dump her after he had his fun. She seemed to, be taking ages in the restroom three songs had played in the time that she had been in there. Not that he was worried or anything but when he looked towards the rest room door, he noticed her coming out of the next door along. It had a small blue bell painted on the door.

Since Clarence had been out of circulation for so many years, it had not been possible for him to learn what signs mean what and or the definitions of the new type of signs with only a picture on them. It didn't matter a damn anyway because he didn't need to know, one was no more important than the other. In any case, they didn't apply to him, bums don't figure the law in anything they do. The sign was the international emblem at the time for telephone. Sheila returned to the car and climbed in. Her mood had changed totally and she had become very friendly to Clarence. He took it as a good sign and became rather hopeful about the coming events of the evening.

"Where to love?", asked Clarence

"Back to my place if you like", she replied.

The big black car sped off into the evenings waning light, towards the outskirts of town.

"Exactly where are we going"?

"Roman Inn" motel just outside of town .I like privacy" said Sheila with a smile.

Of course he had no idea where that was so Sheila enlightened him with a set of directions. He thought nothing of her living in a motel, after all, lots of people do. Like a little lamb he followed her. lead through the suburbs and out into the countryside .

By now it had become quite dark so he switched on the headlights dazzling all of the surrounding area in front of his hurtling four wheeled machine like four shining eyes in the night.

They were running high speed along Heathcliff road , about five miles out of town when Sheila said "We are nearly there , turn off

at the appropriate place and proceeded along the short stretch of road to the motel. He thought it odd that a motel should be built in such an isolated place with only a dirt road leading up to it.

A little way up the road, there was a car nosed into a tree, just off the dirt surface, the hood was up, and there appeared to be a body hanging out of the drivers door. Sheila shouted at Clarence to stop the car. Clarence slowed down and drove carefully by to make sure that it was not some kind of trick. All seemed to be as it should, so he turned the car around and went back to see if there was anything that he could do. He pulled up alongside the apparently wrecked vehicle and quickly climbed out of his car. Sheila followed about six feet behind him. On reaching the wreck, he went straight to the person hanging out of the door and bent over him,

"Are you OK pal"?, he said to the driver

The driver grabbed Clarence by the throat in a split second.

"I will be as soon as you hand over all that cash you piece of shit and hand it over now", he said. Clarence was not ready to do that and a struggle ensued. He dragged the driver from the car and tried to get a hold on him, he managed to get his throat free from the large hands engulfing it, allowing him to breathe. It was a futile gesture, a second guy had been hiding behind a tree about thirty feet off the road on the other side. He had dashed across the dark road and joined in the scuffle in aid of his partner in this affair. Clarence never had a chance in hell of getting away. He felt a shattering blow on the back of his head as he had been struck with a tyre iron. The force nearly made him pass out but as he rolled about on the ground he knew that to do so would surely be the end for him. A series of bone shattering blows were landed in his face and stomach, there was nothing he could do to defend himself from the two attackers rampage. Their attack was merciless and seemed to be never ending.

For a good five or six minutes the attack continued until Clarence could no longer hold up. He was no longer able even to think about what was happening to him. His body was battered and bleeding, mainly from the head and mouth. Pulsating spurts were shooting out of a hole in the side of his left leg. Probably done with a knife of some sort.

"Is he dead"asked Sheila with a smirk

"Who gives a shit "? said the driver"Just get his money and bloody move it"

The smashed body was turned over and pilleged of all valuable items his money,watch and identification card for social security.

As if they had not done enough,they decided to take his car,the key was still in the ignition.

"Just what I always wanted ,a rich bastard to give me a nice new Trans Am". said the other guy with a sarcastic laugh.

"Let's get the hell out of here" said Sheila "I'll take that she said,pointing at the Trans Am"we'll meet back at my place and divvy up".

Both vehicles fired up , and sped off into the night,leaving Clarence for dead at the side of the road,in a pool of blood.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE AWAKENING  
OF  
CLARENCE

Chapter <sup>4</sup>  
 THE AWAKENING of Clarence.

IT was late the next day, when Clarence awoke, after his beating. The sun was shining down on him with relentless scorching, brilliance. It must have been ~~only~~<sup>ninety</sup> five if it was a degree. He began to realise what had gone down the night before. The Trans Am was missing along with the remainder of his money and other little trinkets. His body was racked with pain but mercifully, there were no broken bones, just a three inch gash on his left leg. That would have to be seen to as quickly as possible, before it turned septic. Although Clarence was just a small distance from town, half of that was a secluded roadway with little or no traffic. It was clear to him that it would only be possible to walk out to the road as there was nobody to be seen. No sign of any help forthcoming.

He knew it was only a matter of time before infection set in on his badly wounded extremity. There was no bleeding, whether it had stopped bleeding soon afterwards or it had weeped all night he couldn't say, so he bound it up in a handkerchief and hoped for the best.

The road looked formidable as he climbed to his feet ~~cazefully~~<sup>wavily</sup> in the breeze like a tall pine tree swaying drunkenly in the wind. Towards the city, he could see columns of exhaust smoke from high chimneys; It must have been at least seven or eight miles away from him as the crow flies. He knew that the road should be about two or three miles in the direction of the smoke. That was the way that he would travel, in the hopes that a car would stray down this lonely road and render him assistance.

In his battered state it was not going to be a lot of fun, all that he could think of was to get back at the pigs that had suckered him, beat and robbed him and then left him for dead. This thought gave him energy that he needed to get home, and the drive to survive. He headed to a grove of trees a few yards off the road and found himself a bit of windfallen timber to use as a crutch. Propping himself up on his stick made him feel a bit easier about getting to the highway. There was a very long way to go, so off he went in search of help.

The road was long and the day hot. He had not eaten since the previous day and was becoming rather hungry. Although there was only a relatively short distance to go, he was in pain and weakening from hunger. It was to be a long, long day. About a quarter of a mile along the road, he could see what looked like a small building of some sort, tucked in behind a shelter belt of poplar trees. It appeared to him to be an old farm out building, the type that were sometimes used to store hay and winter feed for farm animals. Since he had covered only a couple of hundred feet or so, he decided to make this landmark his first goal. It took him nearly an hour to reach it, but it was worth all of the effort and pain when what had seemed an infinity away, was now able to be clasped in his hands.

Within its cool dark confines, was offered temporary respite from the harsh, dazzling sun, which was cooking him from the inside out. It wasn't much of a consolation for what he had gone through the night before, but it would do for now, until he gathered enough strength

enough strength to carry on.

After some thought and an inspection of the wound on his leg, he had thought it wise to stay there until nightfall and continue in the cool of the evening. He was beginning to feel a bit nauseas, partially hunger and partially pain. Getting help was getting to be a priority otherwise it would be a matter of time before de-hydration took its toll and killed him. For now he must sleep. Dozing off was easy, the coolness of the shed was bliss as he lay on some hay, stacked up in a corner, He slept.

It was a bright, sunny day; Clarence was driving along a smooth shingle road in the country. There was a woman at his side, a long legged lovely blonde with everything that any man could want. Her arm was around his shoulders and his, around her waist. All was as good as it could be as they sped along in their little mettalic blue Datsun sports car loving the sunshine and enjoying the scenery.

Suddenly, from behind them, there was a smash which sent them both crashing in to the dash. Clarence kept control of the car, and put his foot on the gas to escape whatever was happening behind them. A large black limosine was trying to push them off the road. A long chase ensued, with dust and shingle all over the place. At this point, one of the two men in the limo leaned out of the window and pointed a small black object at the Datsun. It was a .45 hand gun, and it was about to take its toll on anything it was aimed at. The first shot rang out in the air, narrowly missing the head of the woman. The bullet had entered the car through the rear window, shattering it all over the back seat. Now a second shot which missed all together.

Up ahead, Clarence could see an open gate. The road led right into it. There were no other turn offs anywhere in sight, so as there was no choice, he drove in at high speed. The narrow road had become a large expanse of smoothly textured courtyard. It was set out as a huge circle, with the perimeter of the surface being surrounded by a huge four storey circular brick building. The yard looked about two thousand feet across, it was enormous and the further in he drove, the bigger it became. It was as if he was inside a video game, trying desperately to get out. The limo was still there in all of this, the man was still firing at him, and the woman was laughing hysterically. The only thing to do was to try and turn his Datsun about face and go out the way he had come in. But that was not going to be easy, nevertheless it had to be tried.

On went all the stopping power of the little Datsun, throwing it around in a full circle to be left aimed directly at the limo. This made the limo swerve, causing it to run into the building, it wasn't clear whether or not the limo was destroyed but it was clear that the way was clear for him to make his escape so he did.

His little blue car screaming at full revs, and the woman at full lung capacity, he made a run for it. It was not clear who these people were or why they were trying to kill him, but he was not going to wait around to find out. On approaching the gate, the road loomed ahead of him like a spectre, the sky was overcast and black clouds threatened to wash him away with rain at any moment. He was doing eighty miles an hour, and all looked to be ok. He got the feeling that he was being watched, he looked from side to side in an effort to see why or from where. He found out where, that limo was back in pursuit again. All of this was getting to be a bit much for Clarence, it all seemed so odd, nothing was as IT SHOULD be.

The road on which he was now traveling had wound its way into the hills, there was grass on each side at the top of the bank and a sheer face of about twelve feet or so of dirt leading up to it. Their speed was increasing and the control of the Datsun was becoming more difficult. The limo had now decreased the gap between the two cars ~~to~~ ~~only-twenty-metres-or-so~~. Clarence could no longer hold his car on the road, it was pitching and tossing all over the place. A bend loomed before them and there was no chance of taking it without rolling the car, the next thing he knew was a feeling of freefall as the little car became airborne and dived head first ~~over~~ a small embankment and came to rest amongst some long grass. The limo had backed off for want of control and had not seen the Datsun jump the corner, neither were there any tell tale skid-marks because the car had been at full power and Clarence had not had the time to brake. He sat there for a moment wondering if he was still alive. He was and so was his companion whose squeals of terror had turned into sighs of relief. The two heard the screech of tyres and the racing motor just above them. The limo didn't stop so it was obvious that they had not seen the car leave the road. Quickly they got out of the car, it seemed O.K. There was an old cottage not fifty feet from where their car had come to rest. An old white stone building with a red roof, and overgrown with grass and weeds, this was where they would take refuge in the event of the two men in the limo returning. Inside it was dark and forboding. With what light was there, they could see ~~through~~ that they were in a one roomed shack. There was no light or electric power at all. The place seemed to be well equipped with cooking gear and furniture, this seemed odd to them as it was not a well visited place.

"Maybe there's someone living here" wimpered the woman.

"Looks like it, we'd better leave" said Clarence in an urgent tone. They turned to go to the door and get out. A shot rang out as a bullet lodged in the lintel just above where Clarence was standing.

"Shit, that was bloody close". Just as these words left his lips, another shot let go a lead mass, hurling it through a window ~~and~~ into a benign chair leg.

"We are gonna die" shrieked the blonde.

"Those bastards are gonna blow us away" snapped Clarence, "just shut your mouth you stupid bitch and let me think a minute."

The attack continued for a few more minutes, each shot signalling a warning to both of the intended targets to prepare for death.

"We are going to make a run for it"

"But we will be killed. We have no gun or anything" said the woman "What did you do to these bastards"

"Nothing to concern your pretty little head over. Just aim your body at the door, and run like your arse is on fire."

"Where do we run to" she asked.

"Follow the leader" shouted Clarence. As he ran to the door. Out, and to his car. The woman followed amidst a shower of lead but managed to get there in one piece. They quickly climbed in and slammed the doors shut.

"Get your bloody head down" Clarence yelled pushing her to the floor of the blue car.

The car started without any hesitation.

"Wer'e going over the side "said Clarence"Ther's nothing in the way that I can see"he sa  
~~The car moved in the direction of the~~ It was with enormous urgency that he had decided on this action. There was no way back to the road ,and those two goons with the guns were now running down the hill towards the two in the car. Clarence saw them coming and put his foot all the way to the floor ,launching himself and his lover to what would seem to be certain destruvttion at the hands of the mountain,whose every bump and hollow would have a say as to the outcome,the fate of Clarence and his dolly.

The way was relitively straight forward as the little car bumped it's way along.

"We are gonna make it " she squealed,"what a ride"

"Yeah baby,leave it to me,I'll get us there"replied Clarence smuggly.

The car lurched suddenly to the left,It went totally out of control.

"What's wrong Clarence,What 'S wrong,oh no ,no,no" she was screaming her lungs out.

They were headed for a cliff ,several hundred feet above the sea and the rocks around the shore.

"Oh Shit,shit,shit,no not now" .....Clarence.

The car was dashed to a thousand pieces on the rocks below.

"Oh shit,oh shit,no,no,no, mama,help me"cried Clarence;opening his eyes at that very instant,the mament of theoretical death in his dream.That is what it had been, a terribl dream,hopefully not a prophecy of things to come.

He was in a cold sweat,a thick layer of bodily secretion at such a temperture to cause his skin to be clammy,cold and very,very wet.

He had been sleeping for nearly twelve hours .The infection that he was worried about had now occured,the wound becoming puscular and septic.He was without energy ,a very sick man.It seemed that only a miracle could save him .He was void of all hope.There was nothing to do but lie on the hay,drift off to sleep and await the call of death.

It was not long after that ,a volkwagon came down the shingle road towards the small building in which Clarence was asleep.There were several people inside.

"Let's look for a place to stop for the night."said one of the men in the front of this oddly coloured van."

"Ok man,the chicks all want to ,and me too".replied another.

"Hey look man,there's an old shack over there in those trees".

"Oh wow,what a buzz,;Let's go."was the answer.So over to the shack they went.Stopped the van and disembarked.One of the men went inside to look around the site.

"Hey man there's a dudelike in a bad way man .He's inside.I think he's dead or something They all looked at him as if he was crazy or something.He told the others what he saw inside,and they hurried in to the shack to see what they could do,if anything.

All the noise woke Clarence with a fright.He was barely able to move,but he was able to ask who the people were and to help him to get to a doctor for treatment of his infected leg.They explained that they were in the area cruising around looking for a place to "crash" for the night.when they saw this little shack and decided that this was the place they were searching for.Bo they stopped and went in.

"That's how we found you man ,Some of the guys will put you in the van and we will take you to the hospital".tThis was the guy who was driving the van. He looked as though he had gone through a time warp into the sixties,as did the others.They were all the kind of people you would expect to find in a

of people that you would expect to find in a hippie commune, right down to the long hair and love beads about their necks. All of them seemed to be good sorts, a bit far out but good nevertheless. It was only a matter of a few minutes before he was in the van speedin towards town and the hospital. He felt good at that moment, for the horror of the fact of his death had been lifted. For the past few hours, the spectre had played mind games with him, in sleep as in waking.

At last the hospital was in sight, the van had done its job and got them there. A quick screech of brakes, a door flung open and two of the hippies picked Clarence up and carried him to the door, sitting him in a wheelchair on arrival in the main reception area of the hospital. One of the men yelled to an orderly to get a doctor, which he did. Clarence was then rushed away for treatment.

Feeling that they had done their good deed for the day, the hippies climbed back into their van and drove away in the direction of the others that they had left back at the shack so that there would be room in the back of the van for the injured man.

Back at the hospital, Clarence was in surgery, his leg was a mess. Luckily it had not turned Gangreenous, if it had, it would surely have had to be amputated. It was two and a half hours later when Clarence awoke. He was in a hospital bed. There were plasters and bandages all over his body.

He's awake, get the doctor" said the duty nurse to an aide.

"What happened to me?" said a bewildered Clarence. "Why am I here?"

"You are in St Marys hospital, you were brought in here by some members of the public. we think you were mugged and robbed". Said the nurse informatively.

"WHO, did it why.....". Clarence was still in a state of semi consciousness.

"Don't try to talk just now" his nurse told him. "Try to sleep if you can, your'e going to be alright." His nurse had been very reassuring, and that made him feel like sleeping in peacefull respite from the questions he wanted to ask, and the people that he held responsible for doing this to him. He would get even.

Later that night, after the doctor had visited him for the third or fourth time, Clarence got himself out of his bed and walked down to the tv room. He had perked up considerably and was feeling quite well. the Johnny Carson show was on the tv so he sat down to watch it for a bit. He was wondering what he should do the next day, as the doctor had told him that he would probably be released the following morning. Ten minutes of tv was enough fo him, so he turned off the tube and went back to his room. All you seem to do in hospitals is sleep all the time, and when your'e counting time, with a particular objective at the end of it, a little hold up seems to become an eternity. Finally, the next morning arrived and as expected Clarence was released from the hospital. It was a lovely day and a very busy one for him. He was going to find those bastards and get his car and money back. The fist thing he had to do was to get another ten grand of his deposit box, and buy a gun. Also he would need a car, so renting one was the answer. He hailed a cab.

"Where to Mack?" asked the cabbie.

"The nearest Hertz car rental garage". said Clarence.

The cab drove off with a vengent passenger in the back. The ride over and the fare of eight eighteen dollars rang up on the meter.

"Wait for me" Clarence told the driver. He then got out of the cab and went into the

garage. He was greeted by a young woman of around twenty two or three.

"Can I help sir"? she enquired.

"I would like a car for two or three days, what's it worth?"

"Large or small car?"

"Large" said Clarence

"It's thirty dollars a day plus ten for insurance and eleven cents per mile. Or you can go unlimited mileage at fifty dollars per day" informed the woman

"I'll take unlimited" replied Clarence.

"Very well, fill in this form and we'll take it from there".

All of the relevant details were taken and approved.

"I've left ~~all-of~~ my cards and wallet at home, deliver the car to my hotel in two hours from now. It will be cash on delivery". He wrote down the address of his hotel and turned to leave the garage.

"Where to now?" asked the cabbie.

Clarence gave the driver the name of the bank at which his deposit box was situated and the cab headed away, stopping only at the hotel to get the key to the box.

After a ten minute stop at the bank to get ten grand from his deposit box, he got back into the cab and went back to the hotel to await the arrival of his car.

CHAPTER FIVE

REVENGE !!

CHAPTER ~~FOUR~~ FIVE

## REVENGE

The car arrived a little after eleven that morning. He knew it was there by the horn sounding in the parking lot. A couple of minutes later, there was a knock at his door.

"Hertz rental cars here Mr Dewitt, I've got your car outside." came a voice from the other side of the door.

Clarence went to the door and let the man in. After a short dialogue, and a few formalities some money changed hands, as did a set of keys and the Hertz man went on his way.

By now Clarence had dressed up in some good clothes and readied himself for what lay ahead of him. It was hard for him to move with ease considering the fact that he had been so savagely beaten two nights before. As long as he looked after his leg, he would be all right. The doctors had told him that he should stay in the hospital for a week or so, but he had things to do. Some business to take care of. Lying in a hospital bed was no way to get it done.

After a quick look at himself in the mirror, he made his way to the hotel parking lot. The label on the set of keys said, "Chrysler Royale: Blue: Registered number 88035tra." This was not a large car as he had requested, but it was too late now, there was no time to lose as the people he were after already had a two day head start on him.

Clarence climbed into the Chrysler, inserted the key into the ignition and started the power plant in this car. It was nothing like the Trans Am, but it would have to do for now. After all, he would soon have it back and this little car would be returned.

Now that he was mobile once again, he headed out into the city ~~once~~ again. First stop, "Jbeys Firearm Emporium." He was to buy himself a little peace of mind, a weapon to deal out his own kind of justice. He selected a Colt .45. A large hand gun, it would be as effective as anything in the small arm line for what he had in mind. On the road again, he spent hours just cruising in an attempt to find the scum responsible for the attack on him and the stealing of his car and other things.

The time was now getting on a bit, it was around two in the afternoon. It seemed clear to him at that time that it was not to be a matter of simply driving all over the town. It was more like looking for a needle in a hay stack. There was, however one advantage. he knew his car and could probably locate it. The guys who worked him over will more than likely think that he is dead, or at the very least in hospital somewhere just about dead. It was obvious that this was the end to which they had aspired. Clarence had been very lucky, no doubt at all about that, ~~the~~ fact was that he was still alive, and they would not be expecting to see him again. With all this in mind, he decided to carry on until dark. He felt uneasy and a bit unwell. In such a short time, a huge amount of living had come to pass. From rags to riches, and low life to victim of low life in only a matter of days.

One thing that he had learned was that no matter how far up the berry tree you are, you will be just as vulnerable to the events of life that occur at any level. And the more you have, the more some unscrupulous swine will be tempted to take it all away from you. He was of a frame of mind that suggested his total sense of betrayal by mankind. He was being filled with a feeling of hatred so vile, so destructive that it would not be possible to withstand the wrath he would make befall his assailants. He would kill them or he would let them die. That was a simple choice to make for one possessed by vengeance. Something was wrong with him; the feelings he was having seemed wild and totally inhuman. The thoughts of a madman. Perhaps he had suffered some form of brain damage at the hands of those bastards. This was definitely not him. His head ached. Was he tired or was it something else? Should he have stayed in the hospital at the request of the doctors or did he do the right thing in leaving when he did? Who knows, the only thing to do was to find them and do whatever he thought was right at the time, depending on what state of mind he was in at that moment.

That moment was not far off, as Clarence turned the corner, and spied what he thought could be his Trans Am. Cautiously he turned the Chrysler lights off and coasted to a standstill at the rear of the car. He knew in an instant that this was his car. He leapt out of his rented car and walked to the Trans Am at a brisk pace. He looked in the driver's window and noticed his wallet in the console between the two front seats. He tried the door, it opened. Unfortunately, there was no key in the ignition, which meant that the steering was locked. He had by this time become very irate and could not think as well as he might. The first thing he thought was to charge into the building outside which the Trans Am was parked and blow away anything he saw. He did however, decide to take a bit more care about it.

He turned to the building, and slowly walked up to the front door. There was something unsettlingly familiar about this place. The old brick construction, the wooden stairs at the side as a fire escape. This was the side of town that people usually kept away from. Why had he come here? Why did he seem to recognise everything? Maybe the answer lay inside the old building.

On consideration, he decided to enter through the side door at the top of the rickety staircase. The climb was horrific. The old stairs were rotten to the core, he did manage to get to the top intact though, but was confronted by two things. A bricked-in doorway and the sound of his Trans Am roaring off into the night. There was no way in hell he could run down the stairs, if he did there would be a danger of collapse. He found his way down them as well as he could, and ran to his Chrysler. As he sped off in the direction that the Trans Am had taken it was becoming clear to him how he seemed to know that place. It was the building containing the apartment of the woman who he had befriended. The woman who took him in to her apartment and then just took him in. He slammed on the brakes on the Chrysler and spun the car around to point in the direction from which he had just come. He recognised the ploy that they were using. He had used it time and again when he was being pursued by a jealous lover or angry husband. He would, when he heard the suitor coming, or saw him out of the window, dash out of the other exit and drive away very noisily in whatever car he was in at the time, making sure that he was seen clearly, and

which direction he was going, by the other man. The other man would then give chase, and Clarence would wait around the corner until he had gone by. Then Clarence rushed back and robbed him as he drove around with his woman, looking jealously for Clarence to give him a hiding. There would have been no time to gather up everything in the apartment, He knew that he had been seen, though, how was a bit of a mystery, so He thought that these mugs would try and lead him away to facilitate ~~there~~ their own escape from him and all of the trouble he could bring to bear on them. He was right, for as he turned back into the same street, there was the Trans Am, right where it had been parked only a few minutes before.

This time things would go differently from before. Clarence stopped his car at the corner and reversed back around a bit, until he was out of sight of the apartment windows. From here he would have to go on foot to avoid being seen again. He also knew that it would only take them a minute or two to gather up whatever was so important to them inside the building. Getting close was impossible without being seen, and the rear exit was obviously unuseable as he had already discovered. He could not make a run for it because of his injuries, so taking off his jacket and turning it inside out to reveal the black lining, he put it back on. The outside of it was yellow, this would serve to throw those pigs off the trail, to make them lower their guard for just a minute or two. He would not rush or draw attention to himself, but become part of the scenery.

Too long a time had now passed, his action was to occur now if it was to be effective. Slowly, he staggered along the street towards the doorway of that building. For a moment, the curtains were flicked back to reveal the face of a man, Clarence dared not to look up, he kept on walking, slowly until finally reaching the doorway. The person at the window was in fact one of his assailants, looking down from that window, he saw an old drunk, staggering about on the pavement, He saw no-one else, so let go the curtains. They fell shut. The old drunk was Clarence.

The door was not locked and Clarence walked right into the hallway. He remembered this place now, and he remembered the way to the room, the room in which this all started. He walked up two flights of stairs. The room was on the third floor, at the top of the stairs. Only one more lot of steps.

He could hear voices in the room, accompanied by a scuffle.

"I told you, you should have waisted the bum". shouted one of them.

"I thought I had, I mean the dude looked croaked when we left him there, anyway, what about the broad"?? asked the other.

"Snuff her, what else?" came the retort.

It was clear what had happened, The woman was hired to sucker him, so that the other two could clean him out, and if they could do this to him without so much as a slight pang of conscience, how many others had been done over and/or killed for what they had?. He felt the attack all over again, as all of this went through his mind, What happened next was only through pure revenge.

By a renewed energy, previously, never experienced by him before, Clarence drew his pistol from beneath his belt and made a lunge at the door. In their haste, the door had not been locked. In went Clarence at breakneck speed, leaving the two men stunned momentarily. The woman was to, one side of the room tied to a chair, her wrists and ankles were bleeding, one of the men drew a pistol to shoot Clarence. He wasn't quick enough. before he had time to think Clarence had taken a lump of flesh out of the side of his head with the ~~Q~~ 45. He reeled around in death throes on the floor, his nerves flicking the extremities around in random fashion and the gaping hole spurting blood in short regular bursts until his heart finally gave up the fight. Leaving only dead meat and blood on the floor. His accomplice was shocked to the point of kneeling beside him on the floor. Turning to Clarence he said.

"You killed him, I didn't want this to happen, you killed him".

"Yeah, I guess I did, And now I'm going to kill you, you son of a bitch" Snapped Clarence. As these words left his lips, the gun in his hand discharged a lethal load, sending a leaden lump of death into the abdomen of the other man.

"Please don't kill me, I'll give you the money back, Please, please" he grovelled.

"Shut your face you piece of trash, your'e dead meat". said Clarence.

The gun did it's work once again, and the angel of death came to the kneeling man in the form of an air hole in his chest, the rest of his intestines splashed to the four winds.

He quickly cut the woman loose and told her to run out of the building,

"Run to the corner and wait for me there" he told her.

As soon as she had left the room, he picked up a packet of matches that were lying on a nearby table, opened up a newspaper against a wall and lit it. The paper burned and ignited the wall with surprising ease. Clarence smiled as he left the room.

That left only the problem of the Trans Am. He couldn't take it with him as it would surely be connected with the scene. It mattered little now anyway, revenge is sweet, and he could buy another car if he wanted to. He walked to his rental car, the woman had done as she was told, and waited there at the corner.

"Get in the car" he told her.

She did as he bid her and the two drove away just as the fire exploded out of the window and onto the street bringing onlookers galore. Clarence and the woman weren't seen.

It was a clean getaway. The only thing that would ordinarily have made this all tricky was the fact of there being two cars. As the rental one was thw only one of the two to be registered in his own name, through the rental oompany, he had to stick with it.

"You didn't get them all", said the woman nervously.

"What do you mean, how many were there?", Clarence answered.

"There were four of them, the other two will be back here in a few more minutes".

"Was all of this a big operation or something like that?", asked Clarence.

"All I know is that they all worked for some big wig in the syndicate or a gang or something. He lives in a big white place, I've been there a few times. A few days ago, some punk robbed his place and the word is that he's going to be wasted, there's a contra out on his head,." she told him.

"How do they know who they're looking for?" said Clarence nervously.

"I heard it was on a hidden video camera" she told him.

This started- started him thinking, actually more like worrying. He thought that he had not been seen. He thought that he had got clean away with his robbery of the large white house, and the revelry of discovering his legacy in the form of one hundred thousand dollars, and the phobos that he had ripped up. He had not even considered the possibility of the cameras, not surprising, as he had never been into any major burglaries or inside jobs before this one.

A new light had been shed on this new scenario. Things had been bad in the last week or so after the beating that he got. What seemed like a simple mugging, had now become a litaney of evilly orchestrated tyranny on the part of the main man of this group of thugs. It was inconcievable to him that this sort of thing would ever happen to him. He had committed a serious oversight in neglecting to search for cameras or infra red sensors at he house. An oversight that had allready cost him several grand, and could well cost him the ultimate price. His life.

The woman was an odd ball, she trusted Clarence because he had saved her neck back at the apartment, and she told him so. Her name as Clarence remembered it was Sheila, but when he called her by that name, he was corrected. She told him that her name was in fact Lois Otley. Lois wasn't involved in any large way with the syndicate who were after Clarence, But had merely done a job for some cash. Needless to say, there was no cash handed her way, instead she was hogtied awaiting execution by her captors on the word of their boss. Things looked really bad for Clarence. He knew that to take on the mob was suicide, and he also knew that there was more to this than the woman had told him. "I want to know what- how you all got onto me so fast" said Clarence.

"It was actually a coincidence, a part of the usual activity was to hammer a sucker. When you were suckered it was by accident that it was actually you. You see, I was just doing my spiel on you like anyone else. When we had got back to the apartment, it was then and only then that you were identified in a photo on the wall. We The other two were to back and finish you off, but they were held up when the cops stopped them and searched their car for some escaped prisoner or something like that and when they finally got to where they had last seen you. You were gone. The boss was really pissed off when they told him. They didn't know whether you were dead or alive. I guess now I know" said Sheila. It wasn't long after that that Clarence figured out that the mob must know who he is and where his hotel is. It was impossible now, for him to return there. The two would make a run for it, probably to another country. The furthest one there was from this mess.

Once again ,it was time to find a suitable resting place for the night.In the morning he would try to fathom out this awkward turn of events,but for the moment, he would eat ,drink,and under the circumstances be as merry as possible.He was regretting ever having burgled that place at all.When he had done it ,the thought of the consequences hadn't crossed his mind.Now ,it was far too late and he would simply have to make the most of what he had gained. He decided to stay for the night in a sleazy motel in a side road".That would probably throw them off the track",he thought to himself.Sheila was carefree of the consequences of this little night mare.It was all too familiar to her because of her profession,these things were commonplace to ~~her~~<sup>her</sup> someone like her. The thought that was the most prevalent on the minds of the both of them was the thought of dying.Clarence had been close to death on a couple of occasions since the start of this affair and was in no hurry to end it all just at the moment.As for the girl, Being a prostitute is to die a thousand deaths ,so what's ~~one~~<sup>one</sup> more.

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It was apparent to Clarence that getting away from these people was not going to be as simple as hiding out for a while .They would be found wherever they hid. It was to be a desperate struggle for survival;One which could go either way at any point.Clarence knew that at the drop of a hat ,these men could kill them and would do so if they had discovered their location.To survive ,they would need a plan,something to bring the bastards to their knees.

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE PLAN

The motel was a small white,unbelievably dirty little place.Maybe it wasn't extra nice,but it would do,hopefully for the night.Mind you,at five bucks a night ,what else do you expect.The couple bought some hot dogs ,chips,and a ~~diat~~ a couple of diet Pepsi' from the small stand in the lobby ,and headed to their room for the night.

Inside the room,was dark and dingy.It looked as THOUGH IT HAD NOT been cleaned for several months.These places were only good for two things.If your'e broke,and if you are on the run.Broke they weren't,the other was the operative word.This little trick of his fancy,had become a dangerous game.At least he was financial enough to have a few options.In this position a person would find it fatal to be without money. Knowing what he did now,Clarence used his judgement to decide whether or not to take Sheila along with him.It was hard to decide if she was on the ~~leave~~ level or trying to save her ~~arse~~ own arse.Getting out of this alive was to prove difficult to say the least,he did not want her to turn on him later and get him killed.

Sheila was not oblivious to these thoughts going around in his mind.She too was on edge as to what was to happen to her.Was she doing the right thing.Would it be safer to travel with him or dissappear in the night, while Clarence was asleep.

"Better get some sleep"Clarence said,quietly walking to the door.

"What are you doing?" Sheila asked him.

"I'm going to suss out this place,make sure we weren't followed and if we were I want to be able to get the hell out of here in one piece".

Clarence felt nervous and uncertain .He was beginning to have doubts about this place.He felt that he was being watched.Aquick scan of the surrounding area would tell him if this was so.~~There seemed to be no one there,bye~~ He turned from Sheila and walked out of the door,closing it behind him.From the outside of the door,he yelled t her to lock it and not to allow anyone inside.In his mind there was the thought of how this woman had lured him to the middle of nowhere ,watched as he was beaten,robbed and left for dead at the side of the road.Something just didn't sit right.Had he done her a favour at the apartment?,or was he as before,fitting into her plan.There was no easy answer to the dilemma.It was then he decided to take her along for the ride, and give her the benefit of the doubt.If anything did go wrong,he would handle ~~as~~ it as it happened.

All looked clear as he walked about the parking lot at the front of this grotty little hole.He would have a look at the rear of the place and then head back into his room where hopefully,Sheila was asleep.There were fifteen rooms in the place.After a brisk walk along in front of them,they were in one line,and a quick look around the side of the building,left only the rear. Around the back there were two dumpsters against the rear wall.It was very dark out there,but not so dark that Clarence couldn't make out the shape of a car parked there.His curiosity got the best of him and he had to have a look to see what it was ,and why it was there,The rear of the motel was a compound about thirty feet bywide by about two hundred and fifty feet long.It was surrounded ,in it's entirety by an eight feet high wire mesh fence.There was a flood light in the far right corner of this compound,but it ~~ps~~ put out only a small amount of light in comparison with the size or the yard.It was in this semi-gloom that he saw a familiar spectre.That Trans An of his had reared it's head once again.

He slipped quietly over to the car and stopped ten feet or so short of it.Thefe was nobody inside it.

set up once again by Sheila, who was supposedly in the motel room asleep. He wondered also if the two of them had been followed to the motel, he had taken all of the necessary precautions to ensure that this did not happen. Nevertheless he could not be sure. Sheila could be in grave danger in there. He had to at least check it out. To ensure that he would not be jumped and not be well prepared, he reloaded his gun. Clarence knew that they would be expecting him to come through the door in a couple of minutes so he didn't keep them ~~was~~ waiting. The only difference was that instead of entering through the door, ~~he did so~~ he would enter through the rear window of this ~~little~~ little place, as no doubt many others had done the same at one time or another to avoid having to pay the check. There was a small window, and as Clarence was not of very large stature, he could probably get his small frame through with not too much trouble. Although he had not seen much of the room, he did know what was on the other side of that little aperture. The smell made it totally obvious. It was the toilet room, or rather little room. The toilet ran off of the side of the main living area. Inside the living area, he knew that the occupants of the car outside must be in there with the woman. The window to the inside of the place was a louvered one, which would not prove to be any great obstacle as the small bits of glass simply slid out of their encasement and with almost no sound at all. Having removed the glass Clarence climbed through the window and slid the toilet door back an inch or so to get a glimpse of the layout. Sheila was tied up on the bed. There was one man standing facing her, with a gun aimed in the direction of the outside door.

"What do you think your'e doing you stupid slag, you just got Dave and Sam blown away. It's your turn now, but first tell me where that piece of shit ~~Dewitt~~-is that you were with is "Demanded he

"Go to hell you bastard" Sheila squealed.

He struck her about the face.

"I want to know bitch, I should have known it was a mistake to get a no good tramp like you to do a simple job without causing shit. You were paid good money, We own you and no....."

"Nobody owns me you stinking cheap hood", Sheila interrupted. "Go screw yourself asshole"

"Why you, your'e dead meat "he said raising his weapon to her head. Clarence would wait no longer. He snatched his gun out from inside his jacket and barged ~~in~~ through the door into the hot seat, as he entered the man by Sheila turned to meet Clarence head on, as he did so the gun in Clarence's hand landed a crashing blow to the side of ~~the~~ his head sending him to the floor clutching the gaping wound. A shot rang out in the evening breeze, There was a scream and the sound of breaking furniture. Then nothing. A body lay crumpled on the floor of the dark, tacky little dive, with all of the life draining out of a bullet hole in its forehead.

Moments later, a car sped off into the night. It was not immediately obvious what had occurred, it was however certain that a man had been shot to death.

In the car, were two people, Clarence and Sheila. They knew that ~~it~~ it would be only a matter of time before their pursuers were on the trail of their target.

On the run again, from the shadowy spirit of death that they had avoided thus far, made them more aware of the direction in which they must travel continuously to stay alive.

"What are we going to do now"asked Sheila.

"We are going to have to keep on moving until we find a way out of this mess,and that could be a long time"replied Clarence in a worried tone.

Clarence had been lucky up till now,he had managed to stay out of the eye of the law but this was about to change.The noise at the motel had been heard by everyone in the immediate area and it was only a matter of a few minutes before police were all over the place asking questions and taking forensic samples .The definitive line around on the floor of the motel was very sombre in its intent,leaving no doubt in the mind of anyone as to the reason for its eerie human appearance and its position on the floor. The final restraint is death..The worst indignity is death in a public place.

Clarence knew that he was going to attract the attention of all the wrong people when he pulled the trigger.It followed then that it mattered not whether he took, his Trans Am .They would know his name from the reception at the motel anyway,so he might as well take his own car from the scene,at least he would have a better chance of getting away.

What had started as a simple job,now had two people gripped in a life and death struggle.This town was not big enough for Clarence and his pursuers.He would simply leave town,until he could arrange a passport and all of the other necessary papers to enable his escape to another country.

"I think that it would be a good idea to ditch the car"said Sheila.

"No way",replied Clarence"We just do as I have just said,and nothing more.It's hard enough worrying about staying alive let alone having to walk every where.The car stays for now,we will just have to colour it up a bit,paint it ,you know".

It was clear to him that she was worried about the car being spotted.It was a fear that was unfounded for the time being at least.There was now a broken chain of contact all of the thugs who had been following him except one,he had killed.The other would be in hospital for a day or so assuming he lived .That gave Clarence and his side kick a day or so to get everything done.

"What time is it ?"asked Clarence turning to Sheila.

"Around one thirty".

"Shit,too late to catch a hardware store"snorted Clarence.

"It is too late for that ,but there is a garage up on the hill that might be open, why,what do you want?"

"Just a gallon of white ~~water~~ paint and a couple of brushes".

"You're serious about painting this car aren't you"

"You bet your sweet ass Sheila"

"Then you must know that brush painting is tacky slow and looks piss poor,what you need is a half a dozen cans of spray paint and a roll of masking tape."

"How do you know all that?"asked Clarence.

"From when I and the boys used to steal cars,quickly paint them to avoid their being recognised and selling them off with fake plates and papers.".she smirked.

"Sassy bitch" said Clarence with a smile"Maybe we should work together on this one, I'd rather be with you than against you."

With a plan in mind,and this strange new alliance,they set off in the direction of the garage tha Sheila had pointed out.

about as much enthusiasm from the guy staffing the place as a visit to the dentist. He actually seemed to be put out by the sheer fact of having to get up off his ass and drag himself into motion. He went out onto the fore court.

"What'll it be pal".he asked,"And make it snappy,I've got a cup of coffee going cold".

"You just fill it up eh?.I've got a few things to get".replied Clarence."Come on Sheila

The couple went into the garage,while the attendant filled the car.There were all manner of things in there,sweets,drinks ciggarettes,tools and a lot of hardware.

"Can you see any paint Sheila".asked Clarence.

"No,and why the hell do you keep calling me Sheila?".

"Well excuse me ,and what would you have me call you,maam,your magesty,what?".

"Just call me Lois ,I mean ,after all it is my name,and there is the paint on the stand right in front of your nose asshole"she said good humouredly.

"Yes Lois, thank you Lois, anything you say LOis".He replied.

"Oh shut your face and get the paint ,shit your'e a wally"Lois smiled.

They paid the atteddant for the paint and gas and left the garage in typical fashion for Clarence.Rip,shit and bust.Leaving rubber all down the road.The guy at the garage tilted his cap and scratched his head, turned and went back to his coffee,which by now had become quite cool.

They would now have to find a place to quickly paint up the car so that they could go into town and get the last of the money out of the deposit box of Clarences and dissappear into obscurity.It was to be no picnic but it would have its own rewards. in that the very money that he had taken from those thugs would be his salvation. He would use it to facilitate his and Lois's escape from them and try to start a new life in another place.Shortly after they had left the garage,Clarence had an idea of where to go to paint his wagon.He would go back to the shed in which he had taken refuge when he had been so savagely beaten and robbed only a matter of days ago.The bitter taste of this event still lay heavy on his mind,the scarred tissue leaving a permanent remind of this experience.It was partly this and partly the need to survive this adventure that led him back to this spot.Upon their arrival ,Lois seemed a bit apprehensive at being there.After all,it was she who had lured Clarence to the spot just up the road where the attack had been effected.

"Forget it lois"said Clarence.

"I'm so sorry,I really am very sorry"she replied almost bursting into tears.

"No time for sentiment ,we've got a job to do .Pull finger and let's do it eh?".

It was easy to get the car into the shed,there was a double door on the front of the place .It had once been used to store farm equipment and so the door was ample wide enough to let the Trans Am enter so that the pair could commence mid night alterations It took Lois and Clarence about twenty minutes to stick on a rapid dry paint job. There had been no trim tape at the garage to mask the area not to be painted,so it was a matter of spraying carefully around the edges of the roof and filling in the rest afterwards.All the time using the lights of the car to enable them to see what they were doing.

"I thought the paint was white".said Lois .

"Don't worry,red goes just as well with black", "There it's done,it looks all right".

It did look O.K.Since there was nothing more for them to do for the night,they decided to stay there until morning.

65

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE  
DEATH  
RUN

It was a most romantic setting for the two of them to be trapped in .Although trapped was the right word,it may not have been the appropriate adjective,for Lois was getting a peculiar look, on her face.Sort of a sudgee knowing lok.Smiling at Clarence,Lois went to the car reached in an switched on the radio.Suzanne Vega was singing "Small blue Thing".It was a quiet song ,and inspiring for her LOis.Clarence sensed her gaze and looked up their eyes metand Clarence grinned in a stupid expression.



He knew just what that look of hers ment,but Clarence being Clarence could think no further than a quickie,or a one night stand.The look in her eyes was worrying him.It was the look of love.He had been her saviour and she was very gratefull.As a patient in a hospital can fall in love with his or her nurse,so,was Lois infatuated with her hero.Clarence found all of this a bit distressing to say the least.

"What are you looking at me like that for?"he asked her nervously.

"Don't you know Spunk Bubbles?"she replied pushing her body against his,"You have made feel like a real woman,Make love to me".

"What?.Silly cow ,what the hell are you going on about,Youre a hooker"

"Maybe so ,but I have needs too,like any other woman.Don't you think I need to be loved like anyone else"she answered,getting a bit annoyed .

"Yeah but you do it for a living,and with anybody who comes along with the money".

"Do you think I enjoy lying on my fucken back for every Tom Dick and fucken Harry"

"Whoa ,don't get het up over it your language is a bit rough for a woman isn't it"said Clarence.

"My language,you sexist pig what about you,You rip people off,your'e a lazy piece of trash,you have half of the mob on your ass,and you pi\$ about with womans feelings.You bastard you can go to bloody hell"her arms both raised to strike Clarence.He grabbed th in mid swing,pulling her boby to his .In the subdued silver lighting,their lips touched for the first time.Their faces parted a few inches to glance at each other for a second before resuming their passionate embrace.

The hay on the floor was soft and inviting.It seemed the right time for a little evening delight.One thing was sure.There would be little sleep for either of them that night.There were other things to occupy their thoughts and actions.

"It's Three thirty on radio 89fm .here is the news," came a voice on the ~~5~~ radio There were a few unimportant news items,then came one of interest to the both of them. "There has been a night of unexplained violence,~~in-the-first~~ Police have said that the bodies of two men were found in an apartment ~~downtown~~ downtown tonight.The apartment had been deliberately set alight.Both men had died from gunshot wounds.And in the second

a man was found shot to death in a motel. Police are seeking a black Pontiac Trans Am car in connection with both of these killings. Police also say that it is suspected a gangland feud could be at the base of this trouble."

Clarence was a bit surprised at this, although it had to happen sooner or later. The problem was that his car was now known to the police and anyone who should take on themselves to hunt he and Lois down.

"Shit, we're in the crap good and proper now" wimpered Clarence.

"Not necessarily," said Lois. "They don't know that we painted the car. There is a chance that we can slip into town and do what we have to, and get out again without being seen".

"Come on, every two bit hood will be looking for us, we ain't got a show sweet heart." said Clarence. Lois was very self assured, she had endured the worst that life had to offer, all those nights with only the bed of somebody else to sleep in, her meals paid for from the proceeds of selling her sexual favours to any man who had the money. That may not have been so bad except for the pimp who "owned" her body and soul, who would take all but twenty dollars a night off her and slap her around if she held out on a few lousy bucks to get herself a pair of stockings or a bit of clothing. The odd little thing to make a person feel human. She was often beaten about the room for this. The beatings often lasted for half an hour or so. All of this made her determined to break free and get away from this town.

All night Lois stirred, her interest in things natural waning to the point of aggravation to the disgust of Clarence. He had expected sex. In that little shed, in the dead of night. He would have normally got his wicked way but not this time. Lois was thinking up a plan. It was her turn to get up on top, and to hell with those bastards. If Clarence wouldn't play it her way, then to hell with him too.

It was eight fifteen in the morning. The two were woken by sound of birds singing all around them. Loli

Lois was the first to wake.

"It's getting late, wake up" said she said to him..

"Whatb theh- hell"

"It's late, and we have much to do today" said Lois.

Clarence jumped to his feet and turned to Lois.

"We had better get a bite to eat eh?"

"I've already thought of that. I got some sandwiches and Cokes at the garage. We didn't seem to have time to eat them last night" replied Lois.

"You little sweetheart, I'm famished" said Clarence delightedly. "You're full of surprise

~~She was indeed full of them. Idj-in-such-a-way-ta/46990--~~

She was indeed full of these, and in such a way that would often leave him breathless. They ate and drank until the food and drink were gone, which was by about eight fifty or so. This was the day that they had each aspired to in their own ways.

The first thing to do was for the two of them to get into town, get the money and get the hell out of the area. This was all very well, but for the fact that half the hoods in town were after them and they were in a marked car, it was doubtful that even the painting of it would be enough to throw them off the track. The couple climbed into the car and drove towards the outskirts of town not knowing just what to expect on this overcast and gloomy day.

With th Trans Am roaring ,the tyres danced a jig on the rapidly warming bitumen. carrying the occupants into the smelly raucous rat race that is down town new york. Trere were people all over the place rushing madly to and fro like neurotic little mice in one of those maze things the scientists use to test ~~intelligene~~ their intelligence! Mice arw in a way more clever than most people. They seldom fight against the system for very long. Those little things soon learn that it is easier to do what is e expected of you so that you can have wee tit bits thrown to you at your masters leisure"observed clarence.

"What "asked Lois ,very confused.

"Mice",said Clarence."All of these people are just like mice ,scurrying around to work off their arses for a pittence.What a bunch of wankers".

"You have to watch out for those "Mice" you know.They are only subservient while they are sattisfied with the tit bits you feed them.When they get pissed of,they will bite"replied Lois.

"Yeah?,you're right you know"said Clarence"I never thought of it that way"

"Yes Clarence,just shut up before you confuse the shit out of yourself"she laughed.

"You'd be transparent heh heh" she saidwith a chuckle.

"There's the bank".said Clarence,as he pulled the car to a stop right out side the door.

"Wait here in case some one comes or we get a parking violation and have to move the car"Clarence told Lois.

Lois did as she had been told and waited in the car for him to return.That wait seemed to take forever.After what seemed an eternity,Clarence emerged with a grin on his face.All appeared to be in order.Lois waS relieved, and gave a wee smile to him He responded with a wink and a nod .He climbed back into the car,started it and proceed to drive away.All had gone remarkably well ,The balance of the money had uplifted and they could get out of town.If all went well,they would be out of danger by the next day.

• As the car sped in the direction of the outskirts of the city Clarence and his co companion were vibrant with expectation.And probably a little fear as well.It had gone well,too well in fact and ~~they~~ were finding it hard to believe that all of the trouble was over.The ride to the country was smooth and incident free.The two were celebrating in their own ways,the success of the day.

It was a glorious day and all was right for the first time in days.Clarence now had to do the next thing,which was to dispose of the car.It would prove too dear in terms of anonyimity and so must be ~~dispe~~ dumped,and the sooner the better.

As the road wound its way out into the country,the search was ~~on for~~ a resting place for his baby.Unfortunately it had to be permanenb and there must be no sign of it left for the mob to get a lead on.This was the single most important objective of the day. The tyres pounded the road in knowing anticipation.The disfigured Trans Am headed obediently to its death ,like a faithful old dog at the barrel of a gun signalling its unquestioning loyalty,just before the trigger is pulled and its life ceases in an insta Ahead loomed a huge-be-- largee body of water.A lake that could cover the car with a ease and hopefully give them a good head start.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ON THE ROAD

Turning off the road, the lake loomed large as life before them.

"Do you think that dumping it here is such a good idea" asked Lois.

"Yeah. I think so, but not if there is a chance of our being seen" replied Clarence.

They drove around the shore a while until a spot appeared to them which was provide adequate cover until the night had fallen. It was right on the shore, surrounded in trees it was a good spot to provide air cover in case the cops tried to spot them from the air. The paint job to camouflage the car had worked up till now, so they were to avoid taking any chances, to wait until dark before making their next move. Since the day was so lovely, they thought it a good idea to make the most of it. One thing was certain, it would not take the mob long to realise that they had been duped, and would be lying in wait for them. They were about forty miles out of town, and well off the road so the chance of them being tumbled was quite slim.

It was approaching mid-morning. The sun hung in the sky like a huge golden apple, radiating light and a luxurious warmth you felt deep to the bone. As it was fall, the leaves off most of the surrounding trees had changed their colours. They were no longer green in different shades, but brilliant vibrant colours, of reds, yellows and oranges. It was a picture of total serenity as Lois and Clarence stood looking around them in awe at the beauty of this time and this place.

"All this gives me an idea" said Lois.

"SShhhh.." said Clarence "Don't spoil it just yet, tell me later".

It was really a strange twist of fate for the two of them. Although they had both been all of their lives in this part of the country, they had never left the city to see the great outdoors. Smog and pollution were old friends and slums were a way of life. Clarence almost felt sorry for those in the city who were there for lack of initiative to get out of it. Even if they had to walk and take the chance of being mugged. The risk would be worth the result. Freedom.

The sky was blue, so blue that it consumed the heavens in its dazzling iridescence behind the golden mask of the sun, and shrouding all around with a luminescent feeling of well-being. It was as if heaven had descended to the lowly earth to take Clarence and his mistress home to the promised land.

"Do we have to leave here" asked Lois very dolefully.

"Yes, we do, but not at the moment. Just make the most of it, who knows how this will all end" replied Clarence in a moment of weakness. He was beginning to show some strain as all of the events of the past week or so unfolded. He was disappointed in himself for possibly the first time in his life. It wasn't the robbing of the house or even ripping off innocent people that had got to him. It was the fact that he killed the two men at the apartment. Even though they were trapping him into going there to kill him. He thought that it would have been better for him to just immobilise them rather than to kill them in cold blood. He had murdered them pure and simple and that bothered him. The fact that he could do that without so much as a grimace made him sick to the stomach. He told Lois how he felt. She was very understanding.

"Don't you think I have been in that situation before?" she asked him.

"I was in Boston four years ago when two of us girls were attacked by a fella in the park. It was terrible there was blood and bits of clothing all over. He killed Teresa and tried to kill me. I had a mace spray in my purse so I took it out and let him have it right in the eyes. That sucker fell like a ton of shit onto the walkway. He was... I should have run, but I took out my gun and killed him. It was murder" she said.

"What do you mean murder" Clarence asked "It was surely self defence I would have though he replied.

"No, I didn't need to kill him but I did, it might have been the drugs I was on or something, but I swear I enjoyed wasting the bastard".

Clarence was stunned, He was dismayed that a society that he was a part of would harbour so many barbarians, people who found pleasure in the misfortune of others in a sick sort of way. Like it or not, he was one of them and there was no way of escaping that fact of life. His life, anyway. However, today was not the type of day to hold onto thoughts like that. So after a stern talking to from Lois, he bucked up and enjoyed the glory of the day as much as he could. It would soon be over and a new life could be made for the two.

~~I'm scared~~  
Later in the afternoon, about three p.m the temperature began to drop. The local weather authority was forecasting rain and cold temperatures for later that night. Lois wondered how they would get by, with no car to shelter in and no means of warmth for either of them. They may die from exposure to the elements.

"We've got to take the car out on the road again. We are unprepared for any changes in the weather. We have no food and there will be no shelter when you ditch the car. We have to find what we need and then dump the car." Lois was worried. Taking the car out again could mean the difference between life and death. There had not been enough fore thought gone into this venture. In fact this whole thing was poorly conceived in the first place.

"We stay here until night said Clarence "We'll take our chances after that".

"You think you're so good don't you. I mean I'm sick of hearing your lame plans. The way I see it is this, Either we do this together or you're on your own pal. It's up to you, but I want to go now, use your fucking head or we'll both be killed. If they don't get us the weather will". She snapped.

"No, I can't see your point, We stay until night like I said. So if you want to do it your own way, then you can fuck off. Go on just get the fuck out of my sight "shouted Clarence. Lois was used to being shouted at and so this was nothing new. She turned and walked in the direction of the highway.

Clarence was thinking to himself that "Dumb broads are a pain in the ass. They are always in the way. Who needs them anyway?"

Lois had got about 800 yards from the car when a roar came from behind. She didn't look around but simply ignored it. It got louder and louder. Finally, a voice came from her right hand side.

"Come on you cow, get your ass in the car"

"Get stuffed you bastard" came the reply.

"Oh come on I was only joking, Get in the car"

This carried on as a volley of insults and replies for half a mile or so. The main road was in sight and appeared to be practically free from traffic.

"This is as far as I can go, so if you want to go then go".

Clarence knew that to go onto the road was a bad idea. It was only a matter of four hours or so until dark. Why not wait the distance. He stopped the car.

"You look tired, hop in" he said opening the door with his right hand.

Lois looked around at him.

"What are we going to do?" she asked. By this time she was sobbing.

"We'll be o.k", answered Clarence.

"I'm not ready to die .I want a good life not all of this shit that I have had to put up with right the way through" she said. "We have to get something done quickly so that we can get ourselves sorted out".

"Don't worry love "answered Clarence. "We are going to take them all for a ride, if they think that they have us beated then they have another fucking think coming".

For the first time, he had realised that this was no game. These were real men with real guns shooting real life stealing bullets. It was time for him to initiate his plan from the start, and that was to make it big on somebody else's money.

Lois got in the car and they sped off in the direction of the countryside.

"Where are we going to go"? asked Lois.

"We ,my little Lotus blossom, are going to do a little cruise around. We still have around sixty grand to blow ,so the way I see it is that we might as well do it."

"Yes ,but what about the guys on our ass"? asked Lois

"Don't worry about them, I'm not .Look I have already wasted four of them, they will stay back a while until they find out exactly who they are dealing with. By then we will be out of here and into a new place, something respectable like Australia or New Zealand you know one of those little tin pot places down under"

"Why wait, there is enough money to go now, I want to go now Clarence. Do you have a passport?"

"Yes I do "came the reply" I got it when I was in the Marines .Do you have one?"

"Yes as a matter of fact I do".

Well I suppose we should get the hell out of here as soon as possible eh?" said Clarence. At that the car sped off towards the road once again. In a few minutes they had reached the main highway. There was little traffic ,only the odd car or motor cycle moving at high speed was to be seen. The sleek Trans Am lurched off the side road onto the highway burning rubber as she went. Its two occupants preoccupied with their own private fear. The open road is formidable. There is no place to hide if you need to. No shelter and no-one to help if you get into trouble. Time was dragging by. It was getting close to supper time and they were both starving. A roadside diner <sup>appeared.</sup> looked on the horizon.

"There is a diner up ahead" commented Clarence.

"Good, pull in and we can get a bite to eat" replied Lois, "I'M starved".

They entered the diner through the rear entrance and walked over to a vacant table. A waitress arrived shortly after and their order was placed.

"I will have bacon and eggs with a side of fries and the potato salad, and give me a cup of coffee too please" snapped Clarence.

"Don't be so bloody rude Clarence, shit your'e a slob. May I order now please"? Lois asked the waitress.

"Sure, why not. What 'll it be sister". answered the waitress.

"Could I have a large pizza, hawiiian with all of the extras, steak and ~~what~~ <sup>fries</sup> with strawberries and ice cream covered in chocolate sauce and topped with whipped cream. Oh and a cup of mocha Java as well please if that is not too much trouble".

"Not at all ,Hi shall be right back hawith your horder madaam" giggled the waitress.

Lois giggled too. It was fun taking the piss out of Clarence.

Lois giggled too. She liked taking the piss out of Clarence, who half of the time didn't really know why people laughed at him anyway. Secretly she was beginning to fall in love with him. Publicly she made the impression that the guy was an asshole. Clarence had detected the feelings that she had for him and decided that it was safer to just appear to be a pig to avoid her getting rapt on him to the extent of walking up the aisle singing "Here comes the bride" only moments before placing a ball and chain around his neck for the rest of his days. The food arrived and the two began to pig out.

In the corner there was a television set. It was switched on and playing the news "Here is the news. An elderly woman was today knocked down by a car. She was killed instantly. In Utah, this morning, there was a protest march in opposition to the new planned satellite base. There were ten arrests and two people were injured as protesters clashed with police and supporters of the base. The police in the search for the two people sought in connection with the double murder in a suburban motel last night, have come across the remains of a wrecked Trans Am believed to be the one used in the commission of the murder. There were two bodies inside. One of a woman approximately twenty to thirty years old, and that of a male in his late twenties. Police are still investigating. And in Conn-----". Lois turned-off-the-radio-and turned to Clarence. "They think we are dead the stupid bastards" she mused.

"Yes, but not for long" he answered. "It is only a matter of time until they find out who the poor bastards in the car really are".

"Well I suppose that it at least gives us a bit of time to get the hell out of here". said Lois cheekily. The two ate happily and left the diner. Since it was too late to go into town to sort anything out, but still not dark, they thought it would be a good idea to get a roof over their head for the night. A motel was out of the question for obvious reasons so it was decided that the best thing to do would be to find a caravan park. There was no problem finding one of those as there were hundreds all over the countryside. They would continue on the road until one was located and then get a good night's sleep. Hopefully there would not be any interruptions. This had been their only chance to rest properly since the start of the week. The most important thing then was to get back into town and get themselves tickets on the first available flight out. It was not important where it went to, only that it got the two of them out of the country and to safety. Clarence estimated that they had about twenty four hours to do everything and go. After this there was no telling how long it would take for the mob to get onto them.

As expected, the weather turned sour. Threatening high grey clouds had turned to black and was rolling in fast. It would be a very cold night. At least there wasn't any special urgency in dumping off the car. They would take it into town just once more so that all of the travel arrangements could be made. It seemed that the safest thing to do with it from there was simply park it up and abandon it. However, at the moment there were more pressing needs, with shelter and rest at the top of the priority list. The road seemed to go on eternally with little change in scenery. The only difference being the lapse into darkness of all that surrounded the road.

At last in the distance glowed a white light. There was also a rectangular sign flashing alternatively in red and green lettering. Although they were too far away to read the sign, it was obviously a diner or caravan park. There were no hotels or motels this far out of the city.

out of the city. As they approached it, there came a glimmer of hope. As it flashed on and off, the words "Van and mobile home park". The Trans Am swung into the driveway of the parking area. It looked promising. There was an office at the front of a long row of cabins. It is usual to find that the services offered by these establishments include among other things, cabins. These are very small cottage type units, usually with one main room comprising a fold away bed and a television, with a total lack of toilet facilities. You have to share with all of the other tenants of the camp.

Clarence parked the car.

"Jesus this place looks like shit" said Clarence.

"Beggars can't be choosers" replied Lois.

They got out of the car and walked into the office.

"Got any cabins pal", asked Clarence.

"Got a few, twenty bucks a night". came the reply from a rather fat man sitting leaning on the other side of the counter. He looked like something from a Pioneer movie.

"I'll take one for the night only" said Clarence handing over a twenty dollar note.

"Cabin four, here is the key" said the man.

Clarence and Lois set off to find their cabin. It was only four doors away so it didn't take too long to locate. The inside was ok, barely furnished but it would do for just one night. There was a bed in this one, it was an added bonus considering what they had expected. Lois went to the bed and sat on it.

"There is only the one bed, we will have to share" said Lois with that sparkle in her eye once again.

"I'll sleep on the couch" said Clarence.

"Please yourself you bastard", snapped Lois. "You can be such a prick".

"What did I do now", he asked.

"Oh get stuffed dick head" she replied.

Clarence was beginning to get pissed off with all of Lois's temper outbursts. He was insensitive towards her and all other women. Although he was sort of aware of her intentions toward him, he cared little for any feelings that he might hurt. He had been through a tough life, and one which would take down the toughest of people. His reaction was to dismiss it as something that hadn't happened. A lot of his young life had been spent alone. He was used to not relying on anyone or anything. As a result had learned contempt for everything and especially people who tried to get close to him, even as a child.

"Shit, I know I'm going to regret this" said Clarence, "But ;;;..OK move over you dumb broad"

Lois, who had already climbed into the bed, had turned and faced the wall. On hearing Clarence's reply, she turned her over and looked at him.

"Why the change of heart, I hope you have nothing up your sleeve" she said, with a smirk.

"What's with you broads, you moan and bitch when you don't get what you want, and then when you do get it you ask why. Jesus you make me shit sometimes" snapped Clarence.

Lois smiled to herself and thought that he was probably right but that is the way women are. She had plans for Clarence that night. and hoped that he would play along.

Normally he would, if he was a normal red blooded man he would. But Clarence still had doubts. He worried where the antics of this wily woman would lead him to. He worried if he should fight it, and he wondered whether or not to try.



CHAPTER NINE

INTO

THE

FIRE

INTO THE FIRE

That night wielded a lot of understanding on both sides. It seemed at last as if there was something growing between them. As though a door had opened in their lives. At last the future was clear. If they did emigrate then the chances are that they would be able to start a new life together. The further away from there the better, even if it meant going to a place like New Zealand. Clarence had heard that there was plenty of room and wide open spaces there that you could slip into and not be hassled at all. He had heard tourists talk of hills and valleys filled with thousands of sheep, and all of the towns were small with their inhabitants knowing each other. This was the perfect place for them to go. If all transpired as it should, then it may be a good place to settle down and try a life of decency. Anyway, a move was to be necessary and so Clarence made all of the plans in his head while Lois slept.

The ~~next~~ next morning, Clarence woke early. There were birds singing and the sun was shining. The sky was a lovely deep blue. He looked out of the window as he stretched himself into the sun. His eyes surveyed the surrounding area. There were cabins in a row, and he could see the parking lot from where he stood. He gasped in horror. The white marking paint that they had used to paint the top of the car was water based. In the rain from the night before it had washed off, leaving the pure black Trans Am standing there for all to see.

"Holy shit" exclaimed Clarence "Get up Lois, the bloody paint 's come off the god damned car, shit shit shit, now what the fuck do we do "

"Don't panic Clarence, you always make an asshole out of yourself" Lois answered.

"We are going to have to get out of here" said Clarence.

"Maybe not" replied Lois. "Turn on that radio and we'll listen to the news. If there's nothing on it about the car then we are probably o.k"

Clarence switched on the radio. It was only two or three minutes until news time, so they waited nervously in that little room. 524-102

At last the news came on the radio ~~\*\*\*\*\*~~ 801-689. There was no mention at all of the car or either of them so Clarence assumed that it would be safe for them to venture into the city. This would be the last time hopefully that they would have to go back there. They quickly got dressed and went to the car. As it was early, just after seven, there was no problem wandering off with no one seeing them. On the way back to town, Clarence pulled the car into the diner briefly to grab a bite of breakfast to eat on the way. The morning was fresh and the sky dazzling blue. The rain the night before had washed out-all-of- away the clouds leaving the air-crisp-a

sky a deep blue and inviting. The air was very fresh and crisp as they drove away from the eating place and headed in the direction of town.

It was a quiet ride for them, with neither of them saying anything at all until reaching the outskirts of the city.

"Well, we're there," said Clarence "Let's hope that we aren't spotted".

"If we just get on with what we came for then we will be o.k." replied Lois.

There was an uneasy air over them. The uncertainty was creeping on them like a poisonous fungus spreading over the land, devouring all in its path. Still the facts were there. The trip into the city was necessary for them to reach their goal. It would be safer to stick to the back roads and scummy areas to avoid trouble; At least until the travel offices opened at nine a.m. It had taken only an hour to get this far. There was still a bit over an hour to go so somewhere to stop for a while was the order of business for the moment. This part of town Clarence knew well, he had after all, lived there for a long time and all of his associates friends or rather people that he knew, lived there.

The large black car pulled up into his old street. It had only been two or three weeks since he lived there, but it all seemed so different to him now.

"What are we doing here?" asked Lois.

"Killing time", Clarence replied "Just taking a last look around before we leave".

The whole place looked derelict, just as he had left it those weeks ago. The same filth and rubbish on the streets, the same dirty kids playing in the gutters, in the rain - I put in the puddles - left and puddles left by the rain the night before. This was a way of life for a lot of people, and he was glad to be out of it at last. Soon he would be free.

--There-was-a-bit-of-time--

"I don't know about you", said Lois. "but I'm getting pissed off with having to hide to keep breathing. I want to do something about those bastards instead of running away like a punk with no balls"

"Yeah, so what exactly do you intend doing about it then?" replied Clarence.

"I don't know, but I'll tell you what; anything is better than sitting here and waiting to have the shit blown out of us by the people who you got us in the shit with in the first place asshole" Lois snapped at him.

Lois threw open the car door and put her leg out, turning to Clarence she said "Do I leave, or do we kick ass?"

Clarence ,as usual had been outgunned by Lois.Women had that effect on him ,and he often found himself in tricky situations.This time was no different,but it was a hell of a lot more dangerous.There was no time for him to make his decision.He had glanced at the mirror on the dash and seen a large black car pull up at the next corner.It seemed that a pursuit would be inevitable if it was the guys after him,still it may not be.He used his better judgement.

"O.k then,let's go eh?"he said to Lois ,grabbing her arm and tugging her back into the car.

"Maybe you have some balls after all,"she sniggered"I think I've missjudged you after all".

Clarence started the car and pulled out from the kerb.The other car waited a couple of seconds before doing the same.Cla rence thought that it could be coincidence,but took no chances.He took a left,then a right turn and discovered that the other car was still following them,"I have a confession to make to you Lois,"said Clarence urgently.

"What now ?"asked Lois.

"I'm not with you because of what you said to me before,I'm here right now because those guys are on our ass once again and I don't want either of us to get our beans,Look around".

A series of shots rang out,one of them piercing the rear window.Clarence buried the boot and sped of away as fast as the car would carry them.

Inside the following car,were two men hoods,They were employed by the jerk Clarence had ripped off.The important thing was not so much the cash,but the photograph of the dignitary.Good blackmail material is very hard to come by.Besides,when you have this kind of leverage on somebody in a position of power,it is a pain in the ass to lose it.He had to have the photo returned ,or he would be connected to a huge scandal.This meant a felony rap for sure,he was a desperate man.Clarence had disposed of the photo beforehand and so there was no real problem for the boss.However, he didn't know that and so assumed Clarence to be a severe risk.He must die.

The black car was not as slow as it might have appeared as it pulled alongside the TransAm .

"Shoot the punk driving,don't worry about the dame,we'll blow her away later"snorted one of the passenger,whose name was Hal.

Several shots were fired at the TransAm,blowing out all of the side windows on Clarence's side of the car.

"Keep your head down Lois,"Clarence shouted at her,holding her down to the front seat.She was screaming her lungs out.

"Shut up you stupid bitch,I can't concentrate with all that fucking noise"he snapped.

The two cars were barreling into each other, speeding around the back streets. With shovs coming from the other car, Clarence and Lois stood a high risk of being blown to the four winds. There was only one thing for it.

"Lois take the money and strap it to yourself somewhere, you are going to make a run for it". said Clarence.

"Are you fucken crazy? I haven't a chance in hell of getting away with that, I'll get blown away." she snivelled.

"Here, take the gun, take it. Remember Lois, it's a matter of balls" he replied.

She lay the money flat in the paper bag and wound it around the leather belt off Clarences trousers, before lifting her blouse and strapping it to her waist. It left quite a bulge but it would hold firm.

"right" said Clarence "When I tell you to, get out of the car, you will know what to do. Just remember this, if all goes well. We'll meet at Barneys diner ~~tomorrow~~ tonight at six PM."

"All right, I'll try and remember that" said Lois

Clarence hit the brakes throwing the car into a four wheel drift, shouting for Lois to get out as the car approached a standstill. She did so and ran for the cover of a nearby brick warehouse. Clarence drove away at breakneck speed in the direction of town. The other car stopped for a second.

"I'll take the dame out" said the passenger. "She ain't got a gun or nothin", you get the guy in the TransAm"

At that he jumped out of the car and ran to the alley into which he had seen Lois ~~run~~ disappear. The car sped away after Clarence, with tyres screeching, while the other one went in pursuit of Lois.

Behind the warehouse, Lois found several more alleys. There was one problem though in that all of them were blind. They went nowhere at all. Only to blocked off doorways from now dissused buildings. She could hear the running footsteps approaching her from the street. Closer and closer they came until they seemed right on top of her. There was nothing much in that alley. Some old rotting garbage against the end wall, assorted bits of wood and metal and an old rubbish bin, one of the forty four gallon drums that are found all over the place. Lois pushed over the drum just as the footsteps entered the alley.

"Come out bitch, There aint nowhere to hide in here, I know you're in here, tell you what I'll do you come out and we'll talk a deal how about that huh?" the hood chided.

He walked slowly up the alley. Lois was not in there or at least was ~~well hidden~~ the lady, give us that punk and you'll be let go. I got no quarrel with you aw come on" he said slyly

His gun was poised to kill, and his heart beating with the fury of a caged tiger. There was no chance of her getting out of this alive. It was simply a ploy to get her out of the woodwork and blow her away  
 "What do you say lady, we got a deal?" he asked.

Not getting any answer, he made a dash for the rubbish drum lying in the corner. He felt certain that she was hiding either in or behind it. He pointed his gun at it and fired twice.

"You're dead meat now bitch" he laughed looking over the top. There was nothing there.

"Look behind you" came a sarcastic sniggering voice. "Wow, you really fucked up dog breath" she said aiming her gun at his head.

"No, I was only joking, no, ... please no" he begged.

"Bye bye bastard" she smiled. .... Boom..boom..boom. The 44 took yet another set of brains and tossed them all over the alley wall.

Lois turned to the flicking body, bent over it and went through the pockets. There was a wallet, seven clips of ammo for his gun, a pack of cigarettes and lighter and an address book.

"Interesting" she said to herself as she picked up his gun. She kept the gun and clips, and together with the address book ran off before the police showed up.

Out on the street, traffic had begun to flow, people were on the way to work. There was nobody looking in her immediate direction so she simply walked out of there and onto the street walking towards town center. It was only a matter of minutes before the police cars came wailing up the street, followed by an ambulance. Lois stopped for a moment to look around as a bystander would do, before continuing on her way.

The day was long and her mind was overflowing with "what if's" as she wandered about waiting for a sign of Clarence and six o'clock at Barney's. ~~One-cup-of-coffee-after-an-~~

The chase had resulted in several accidents and of course more shooting. After about ten minutes, the hood had returned to pick up his partner only to find him being wheeled to a coroner's van. He knew that it was not the dame, she didn't wear black shoes. He returned to his boss.

"How did it go Hal, Huh, and where the hell is Walter." snapped the boss  
 "He's um, Well you know that broad you hired to ice the creep what ripped you off boss, Well she like blew him away and the other jerk lost me in traffic down town".

"You bungling idiot, how many more of you will he blow away. I want the cunt dead..dead...dead. no pissing about there is one hundred grand

for the one who brings me the head of Mr Clarence Dewitt. Any more fuck ups and I'll kill you myself. Understand?"

"Yes boss ", grovelled Hal.

"O.k then .Now tonight at Twelve sharp we are having our selves a little meeting .Laine Chandler and his boys will be there.All of us will be there too and I don't want any trouble from any bastard who thinks that they are bigger than the mob.Everyone from the north side and all of us on the east side will be kind of joining together .It's goin to be better that way.Me and Laine are going to take over the whole town.Nothing will go wrong.Is that clear?Remember ,I'm holding you personally responsible".The boss was taking a big chance in trusting Hal with that tall an order,but for the fact that Hal was the longest serving member of his organisation.The meeting of the two factions was an important step in the power struggle within the city,When East met North,they would be the largest and most powerful corruption and vice syndicate in this part of the country.They would be unassailable.

Hal, felt uneasy about the whole thing,however there was no choice unless of course he wasn't too happy with living.Nevertheless his was an important job and he was loyal to his boss and the syndicate and so he would do as asked and keep all safe and sound.He set off to round up all of the boys.There was to be a showdown,one which they must all win.Hal had his life on the line and so they must find Clarence and Lois and kill them both before midnight.

After they had all gathered and had been briefed on what was going down Hal returned to the boss.

"Did you get it all fixed up hal"? asked the boss.

"Yeah,Idid boss.Where are we going to have this pow wow tonight?"

"The usual place in Elton lane,warehouse number eight.All of the other ones have our merchandise in them.Now just remember what I told you.You don't do me proud then I Kill you myself"the boss replied"now get out".

There was a lot to do and in a short time so off Hal went in search of his prey ,along with thirty two of the syndicates sheep to the slaughter.It was an awesome sight as the stream of cars left the headquarters and went in their own separate directions ,all with the same goal.

CHAPTER TEN

A  
DEADLY  
UNION

CHAPTER ~~TEN~~ TEN, A DEEPLY

MURDER

Between Clarence and Lois all day was wasted. Still it was probably better than taking the chance of being seen again. They both knew that every hood in town would be looking for them. Clarence had ditched the car in a side street on the other side of town and was making his way back to the diner. It would take him two or three hours to get there. He had no money, no gun and no idea if Lois would show up as she had said. He knew not if she was trustworthy, after all, he had given her a hard time since they had met, now he had needed to trust her to keep the money safe. The million dollar question was, Would he ever see Lois or the money again? It was to be a long unsure day for him, and a long walk for sure. He had time to think things over and find out what made him tick. His life had changed dramatically in only two or so weeks.

Lois on the other hand was having a crisis of her own. It was only too clear to her what was going on. There was nothing really binding her to Clarence, she had all of that money and what a time she could have with it all. In any case he had been a real asshole to her all of the time so why should she worry about the big lump of meat. This was her big chance.

Still in two minds as to what to do, she decided to watch a few movies to fill in the time and to try and make her mind up. Especially her feelings toward Clarence.

The mobsters were having no joy at all in finding the two. Hal was in it up to his ass and knew it. There was a hundred grand incentive in it for all of them and that would keep them all going as long as it took to find them. Hal was a worried man obviously. There was no real way to escape the wrath of the mob and his boss if he bungled. Why had his boss turned on him after all these years? It seemed very unfair. There was soul searching to do on his part as well. He had no family at all, through involvement with the mob in an incident three years ago. There was some shady dealing going on and Hal got tied up with it indirectly for his boss. The other gang raided his house, along with others and killed his wife and twin daughters aged nine, and then left a message on the wall written in their blood "You do this again and you will die like your family". He was bothered by the joining together of the two areas, in light of the fact that it was Laine Chandler and his mugs who killed them. It was clear that no matter what he did he would be killed. The question was. What was the right thing to do?

Clarence arrived at the diner at around five thirty, walked in and ordered a cup of coffee, and a plate of steak and fries. The waitress brought it over to his table, set it down and smiled to him.

"Waiting for someone sweet?" she inquired.

"Yes, yes as a matter of fact I am" Clarence answered. The waitress turned, giving him a wink and went to serve another table.

He had no money on him, but felt sure that Lois would be there soon. If not he would end up doing dishes when he got the bill.

The movies had finished, and Lois was out on the street heading towards her destiny. She had decided what to do and there was nothing that could or would change her mind. A walk was the last thing on her mind right now. Peeling off a twenty dollar bill from her pile, she whistled up a cab, got quickly in and informed the driver of the destination with a smile on her face.

Not finding it possible to track down Clarence and Lois, Hal decided to head to a diner or burger bar for a bite to eat.

"What do you say Steve, Get a bite to eat huh?" Hal asked.

"Yeah, why not. I know this little place a couple of blocks from here, they dish up a real nice feed" replied Steve.

The diner came in sight.

"We better make it snappy" said Steve "and don't get out of my sight, the boss wants me to keep an eye on you Hal, so don't do nothing to make me nervous, The boss might not like me anymore" he said and sniggered.

Hal was now sure of where his loyalties lay. His boss was going to shit on him real bad. He had to do something...fast.

As the car pulled in to the diner parking lot, Hal was sure that something was going to happen to him. He had a gut feeling and was seldom wrong.

The two men walked into the diner and sat down at the table beside the door. The waitress was soon over to them taking their orders.

"Gimme steak and eggs, oh and a side order of fries, and a cup of coffee" said Hal.

"That's a popular order. That guy over there just ordered the same thing" mused the waitress. Hal's eyes flicked in the direction of the guy pointed out by the waitress, and nearly fell out when he saw that it was Clarence. He could not believe his luck.

"Look-at "Do not look Steve, But there is that guy Dewitt ever's looking for. Do not do nothing, just-eat-up-and-we'll-leave we'll get out of here and wait outside for him to come out and then bam...dead meat." said Hal quietly.

Steve agreed and the two returned to their car to wait. Clarence had not seen them either enter or leave. Hal didn't know where Lois was. He had not seen her in the diner. They had only waited ten minutes or so when a cab pulled up. Out stepped Lois as bold as brass, with a smile on her face worth a million dollars. She was the happiest that she had been in years. Tonight she hoped to get meet her destiny. She paid the driver and walked into the diner, stopped at the door and scanned the room for Clarence, and upon seeing him skipped over to him and sat down. "I'm here" she said.

"Thank god, what happened in that alley, I saw you run in there with that bastard after you, Shit, I thought you were dead" answered Clarence. The two then proceeded to describe their day to each other, had their meal and after paying the bill stood up and walked out of the diner. The two men had seen them get up and left their car, guns drawn and quickly ducked behind a nearby concrete wall. Clarence and Lois walked directly by them and were greeted with.

"Stop right there pal and raise your hands, go on, and the little lady". It was Steve, Hal was on the other side of the wall, and stepped out.

"remember me?" Hal said to a surprised Clarence "you know, from this morning. The broad wasted my partner. Now, I'm gonna waste".....

He turned the gun in an instant, on to Steve "You". He pulled the trigger sending Steve's body sprawling onto the pavement. Turning to the two shocked people in front of him, he aimed his gun at Clarence and said "Get into the car, both of you. The guy can drive. I'll be in the back. You get an explanation when we are rolling". Said Hal.

The three got into the car and Clarence sped away before the police arrived. It wasn't long before Hal had told them his story. Lois said, "You poor thing, since you are the one with the gun, what do you want us to do?"

"I'm sorry," said Hal replacing the gun into his holster. "We have to stop the merging of the two mob areas. If I am seen I'm dead meat." He told them of the meeting going on that night and where, as well as the rough layout of the place,

"I have an idea" said Clarence "It will solve all of our problems at the same time without the worry of being chased all of your life. Here is what we'll do".

The plan was agreed on by all and they set off to find one of Hal's contacts for some specialised equipment. There was not much time as it was now approaching seven o'clock in the evening.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

NIGHT

OF

FIRE

Chapter  
Eleven  
"Night of Fire"

~~and~~ The hoods would start arriving at the warehouse at around ten, leaving only three hours. They were going to see Lenny the loser. If you had something that you didn't want, Lenny would lose it for you, and in a big way. He was a real artist. There was no better explosives man in the game. Hal felt sure that he would help him out. The black car pulled up outside a little shack out the back of a deserted trucking yard. They walked up to the door and Hal knocked twice, once, and then three times. ~~on the~~ The door opened and a small wiry man in his sixties poked out his head.

"What do you want" he said sharply.

"It's me, Halmond" said Hal "I'm in the shit and need your help"

"Oh shit, I suppose you'd better come in then, hurry up and tell me what you need". said the funny little man.

Hal told the story to Lenny briefly and told him what they intended to do, to which Lenny answered.

"Well the way I see it you gonna have to either kill me or take me with you eh? Yes, you bet your sweet ass I can and will help you out. I've been waiting for a chance to get back at that prick for killing Willy. If this all goes wrong then he'll know who to blame. I'm the best and he knows it. I'd be surprised if they haven't followed you here now. Now that you're here I have no choice see?. Come over here and see what I got for you. It's the latest state of the art ker blooie" he said holding up what looked like a small transistor radio set.

"What is it" asked Clarence.

"Radio control my boy" replied Lenny.

"Yeah" said Hal "Beautiful, how does it work then?" he asked

Lenny showed the three the way in which the devices were to be used,

"I hope there are enough" remarked Lenny, "I've only got twenty seven" he said with a titter,

Lenny also had a stock of artillery ~~to~~ of which any terrorist could be proud.

"Wow, what a fucking arsenal" said Lois. "What are you going to do? take over the world eh?"

there were weapons of many types, Lenny selected four machine pistols and enough ammunition to kill a thousand men, handed the other three one of the pistols each and told them to take their ammo from the pile. In a carry all bag, he tossed the made-up radio controlled explosives, and the spare ammo.

"Let's go" he said "We'll work out the details on the way over."

The four left the shack and ran to the car.

"Get in"shouted Lenny"Let's get out of here"

The car ,with Clarence driving,roared off the way it had just come.

Lenny opened his bag and pulled out a radio sender unit.

"Watch this "he smiled as he pressed the large red button on the front of it.There was an enormous explosion from the place they had just left.

"Pretty good eh?"laughed Lenny"they won't know what hit ~~them~~ them".

The time was getting on by now.Nine fifteen to be exact and they were within two blocks of the warehouse.Hal decided to stop the car where it was and go the rest by foot.Clarence complied with his instructions and pulled up with a jerk.

All of them sat there for a moment to gather their thoughts and go over the plan once more.

"Why did you blow up all of the weapons?"asked Clarence.

"Because I'm not going back there again,After tonight I could'nt if I wanted to,any way if this goes wrong then nothing's lost"replied Lenny.

~~Lenny&Hal,wade-to-divert-~~

deviating

The four set off up the road towards the target,Deiating only to get around the back of the row of warehouses.Lenny and Clarence climbed in through a back window .They were to place the explosives strategically to "bring the house down".Hal and Lois would deal with anyone who would get in the way,as quietly as possible.They climbed up onto a fire escape and made their way along the mass of steel mesh catwalks to the warehouse.Through the windows Lois could see that as yet,no-one had arrived.

"All clear"she whispered to Hal.

"You stat here Lois,I'm going over the roof.I need to make sure that the street is clear."

Hal dissapearred over the roof tops.It wasonly a short time before he was back.

"All clear over there as well"he said to Lois.

Up on the roof, Hal had found a way in.

"You game lois"hal said.

"You bet your ass pal"came her reply"let's go".

They climbed to the roof and Hal guided her to the sky light,once open ,it led them into a series of catwalks and loft storage space. A perfect vantage point to spot intruders.Hal and Lois headed quickly for the ladder.They

"No you wait here Lois"said Hal.

"Why".

"Don't ask questions ,just wait here".he repl ed.

Hal descended the ladder hurriedly and headed for the front door.A car pu pulled up.Just then ,Lenny and Clarence came through from the back of the building.

"We are just about done,keep us secure for ten more minutes"said Lenny.

"Right,get moving then"came the reply from Hal.

The two men scurried away into the darkness,The large front door came open and two men came in.

"What are we supposed to do here,"?asked one of the men

"Check the place out for the boss man". answered

"Good,let's get on with it then."

They went about the building to find a light switch,but in the dark it was not easy to see- find. However,find it they did and turned it on revealing for all to see,a large empty warehouse.

"All clear,let's go".sa d one of the men.

They turned out the light and walked back throught the doors.Hal heard the car drive off and headed back to the others.Lenny and Clarence had finished laying the explosives and had climbed the ladder to Lois who had directed them there with a whisper.The next thing to do was wait, until everyone else had arrived.When that had happened ,Hal and Clarence would go back down to the road for the second part of their plan.

At nine fifty the cars began to arrive.By ten past,all of the men were there.Out side ,were about fifteen hoods guarding the front and the rear of the building.Hal & Clarence went back over the roof and down the fire escape .It had to be done quietly because of the men in the rear .The two slipped down the fire escape without being noticed,and crept around the corner of the building,there were five men in that alley and not one saw them.Hal and Clarence waited at the side of the warehouse .The magic Time was to be 10:30.Hal looked at his watch, "Ten twenty nine "he said quietly to Clarence."get ready"

It seemed to take hours for the few remaining seconds to change to the half hour.But when it did ,they knew what to do.Lenny and Lois began firing inside,the men on the out side had to stay there no matter what.That was where Clarence and Hal came in.~~One went-~~ Clarence went to the rear and Hal to the front.They were both firing their machine pistols.Clarence cleaned up very quickly with only five hoods to kill. He then ran to the front of th building .There was firindg going on he could see sdveral men lying on the ground.Lifting his gun he let rip,The hoods were only using .38 sidearms and stood no chance.All but tw

two were dead, it was then that the firing stopped from inside. Lenny and Lois hurried down the fire escape. All seemed to go as planned when a single shot rang out. Lenny crashed to the ground, Lois finished the descent and ran to him. He was dead, the bullet had entered his heart, killing him instantly. It came from one of the hoods who had been shot by Clarence. He was still breathing and as he raised his gun towards Lois, a volley of machine gun fire exploded cutting his body to bits. Lois turned around to see Clarence standing there, "Thank you" she said to him.

"Get the radio control and let's go" snapped Clarence.

This was nearly the end. Clarence and Lois ran to the front of the building and took up their positions.

Hal had finished the others in front off.

"Do it Lois" said Clarence.

The front door burst open. Lois took the radio control unit and pressed the red button. Hal and Clarence opened fire on those who were trying to get out the front door. They fell like flies as the explosives began to rip apart the building. There were bits of arms and legs flying in all directions, punctuated with glass and jagged bits of a assorted building material.

Suddenly, out of the front door came Hal's boss. He raised his gun and sent a leaded lump crashing into the head of his long time employee. Hal fell to the ground as Clarence shot the boss through the heart. There were now no more people coming through the door, there was only the screaming of those trapped inside. Several more explosions ripped and tore at those bodies left inside. Clarence and Lois ran to avoid being struck by the flying corpses and debris. There were only two survivors. Clarence and Lois. As they ran down the road to the car, rubbish pursued them. They quickly got into the car, started it and drove away from all of the noise and smoke. As the shiny black car pulled away, Clarence pulled Lois over to him and placed his arm around her shoulders,

"You made me realise a few things about us" he said

"like what"? Lois enquired

"Like whether or not I had the guts to ask you to marry me" he said

"Marry you?" said Lois bewildered.

"Yes I love you, and we've been through a lot together, will you marry me"

"Why yes, I do believe I will," came the answer.

"I never thought I'd do this" said Clarence.

"Well", said Lois thoughtfully "It's all a matter of balls"

And the two laughed as they drove away.

THE END