

Ear-rings from Frankfurt

by Reg Wright

(Adapted book. Elementary level)

CHAPTER ONE

A night out at Maxim's

Jennifer looked at the clock on the waiting-room wall. Nearly half-past eight. The light was still on in Doctor Gibson's room. I'm going to be late, she said to herself, why doesn't he hurry up? The evening surgery was always busy on Thursdays but tonight was worse than usual.

She quickly put the newspapers in a cupboard. Then she took off her white coat and locked it in the cupboard too. She was turning off the lights when someone rang the front doorbell. Oh no, not another patient, not at this hour. She ran to the door and opened it. Outside it was dark but she could see a man, his hands deep in his pockets. He moved his head and the light fell on his face.

'Richard!' she cried in surprise. 'What are you doing here?'

'Can I come in for a minute?'

He did not wait for an answer but pushed past her and went inside. Jennifer turned to him. She was usually pleased when Richard called, but this was the wrong time. 'I'm sorry,

but you can't stay. I must hurry. I'm meeting my friend Claire for dinner and...' She stopped. It was Richard's eyes - they looked tired and worried.

'What's the matter?' she asked.

Just then Dr Gibson called from his room. 'Did I hear the doorbell, Nurse? Was it another patient?'

'No, it's only my brother Richard,' she called back.

She turned back to Richard. 'Is something wrong?' she asked again.

He shook his head. 'I'm fine,' he said. 'It's just... well, I had some trouble at work.'

'Trouble?'

'It was nothing, really. I said something to my boss and he didn't like it. He got angry with me and... and in the end he told me to go. So I've lost my job.'

'Oh Richard, not again! Why do you do these things?' Jennifer was beginning to feel cross with him. 'And now you have no money, is that it?'

'Take it easy, Jenny. I don't need very much. Only twenty pounds. I'll pay you back next week - really I will.' He put his hand on her arm. 'You can do that for me, can't you? Just twenty pounds. It's for a present.'

'Yes, I know, I know. A present for a very special girl - like the last one. And the one before.' Jennifer knew her young brother well and she was often angry with him, but she could never say no to him. She opened her bag, took out

some money and gave it to him. 'But remember, I want it back next week.'

Richard smiled and put his arm around his sister. 'Thanks, Jenny. This is different. Really! She's very, very special. But you're in a hurry so I'll go now.'

'Don't forget,' she called after him. 'Next week. Twenty pounds.'

Maxim's restaurant was busy - young men and women from offices, several older people, a group of students, and a few theatre people. Jennifer looked around for her friend. Claire usually sat near the window but tonight she was not there. Somebody was having a party and all the tables on that side were full. Then Jennifer heard Claire's voice behind her. 'Did you get lost? I've been here for hours.'

'I know I'm late,' Jennifer said, 'and I am sorry. Today has been really busy. The last patient didn't leave until eight-thirty. And then I had a visit from Richard. He wanted to borrow some money. He always wants to borrow money.'

They went to an empty table. A waiter came up to them and took their orders. At that moment there was a cheer from the party beside the window. An older man in a light grey suit was standing up. He spoke for a few minutes and then held up his glass. All the others stood up, and looked at a young girl with large gold ear-rings, who was sitting in the chair next to him. Everyone was laughing, and then they began to sing 'Happy birthday to you'. They were all looking at the girl, but she herself just sat there without a smile on her face. The song came to an end, and there was another

loud cheer and more laughing and shouting. Someone called out 'Twenty-one today, twenty-one today...', and this time everyone in the restaurant sang too.

Suddenly there was a loud crash. Then someone screamed and a voice shouted, 'Bring a towel - quickly.'

The man in the grey suit was lying across the table. He was holding his face, which was red with blood. On the table there was broken glass.

Someone said in a loud voice, 'What happened - did he fall?' Several people were speaking at the same time. 'It's his heart, you know...'

'Joe's been in and out of hospital for years...'

'His head hit those glasses'.

The man was still lying across the table. Jennifer jumped up, and both she and Claire ran over to him.

'We're nurses,' said Jennifer. 'Can we help?'

There was a cut on the side of the man's face. It was deep and he was losing a lot of blood. A waiter ran up with a towel. Jennifer took it and held it to the cut. The man's mouth was open and he was making strange noises.

'He needs a doctor. We'll have to get him to hospital,' Jennifer said. She turned to Claire. 'You came here in your car, didn't you?'

'Yes, come on - we'll take him,' Claire replied.

They helped the man outside and put him in Claire's car. Jennifer jumped in beside him and they drove off. She

was still holding the towel to the man's face. The blood was not coming so fast now and he was beginning to feel a little better.

'Where... where are we going?' he asked. 'Are you taking me home?'

'Just stay there and don't speak,' Jennifer told him. 'You fell and hurt yourself. You'll be all right, but you must see a doctor. We'll be at the hospital in a few minutes.'

At the word 'hospital' the man immediately tried to sit up. 'No, no,' he said angrily, 'I don't need to go to hospital. I'm feeling better now. Just take me home. And who are you?'

'I'm a nurse,' Jennifer told him. 'And you need to see a doctor. We're nearly there now. Just sit still - and stop talking.'

But the man was feeling stronger now and he would not be quiet. He pulled at Jennifer's arm and said loudly, 'I don't need a doctor. It's just a small cut on my face. I'm all right now. Take me home!' When Jennifer did not answer him, he said in a quieter voice. 'Come on now - listen to me. I'm feeling fine, really I am. There's no need to take me to hospital. They'll want to keep me there - they always do, because of my bad heart. You see, I have to meet some business people the day after tomorrow - it's very important. So just stop the car and I can get a taxi home.' By now the car was at the door of the hospital. A nurse came to meet them and while Claire told her about the accident, Jennifer helped the man out of the car. He said something angrily to

the nurse, but after a few seconds he went with her into the hospital. Jennifer and Claire drove away.

'What a difficult man!' said Claire crossly. 'No "Thank you for your help" or "You're very kind".'

'Some people never say thank you,' Jennifer said.

'Don't worry about it.'

When they got back to Maxim's, a police car was standing outside, with its blue light on. There was a small group of people around the door. Jennifer pushed through them, Claire behind her. They tried to go inside. A policeman moved forward and put up his arm. 'You'll have to wait here,' he told them.

'But we ordered dinner... and we haven't eaten yet,' said Claire.

But the policeman was not listening to them. He was looking through the glass door. Something was happening inside and people were moving about. Then one of Maxim's waiters opened the door and two policemen came out. They were holding a young girl between them. It was the girl from the birthday party, the girl with the unhappy face and the expensive gold ear-rings. The police pushed her into the back of their car and drove away quickly.

Jennifer and Claire looked at each other. What an evening! They waited two or three minutes, but the restaurant door was closed now and the policeman was standing in front of it again.

Neither of them felt hungry anymore. They walked slowly towards the car. Claire was the first to speak. 'Come on, Jenny, let's enjoy ourselves - we're having a night out.' Jennifer did not speak.

Claire went on, 'Do you remember Maxim's little song on TV?' She began to sing:

Come where the music's wonderful,

Come where the food is fine.

Let's all meet at Maxim's,

We'll have a wonderful time.

She stopped. Jennifer was not pleased. 'All this is not really my idea of a wonderful time,' she said. 'I'm tired and I wanted a nice quiet evening, a good meal, and an early night.'

'Come on,' Claire replied. 'Let's go to another restaurant.'

'No, let's leave it till next week. I'll just walk home now.'

They said goodbye. Claire got into her car and called, 'See you next week, then.'

Jennifer walked slowly home. She felt unhappy and worried - worried about her young brother, Richard. She remembered his visit to the surgery earlier that evening. He was always in and out of jobs, and never had any money. A year ago he had a little trouble with the police, but Richard did not worry about it. He never worried about anything! He

just laughed, and came to Jennifer to ask for more money. Both their parents were dead, and there were no other brothers or sisters. So Jennifer, fifteen years older than Richard, worried about her brother a lot.

She went past a jewellery shop with its lights on, and stopped to look in the window for a minute. She saw some ear-rings and then remembered the gold ear-rings on the girl at Maxim's. They were large and looked very expensive - and they looked all wrong next to that small unhappy face. Where did she get them? Jennifer smiled to herself. Perhaps the police were asking that question now.

CHAPTER TWO

A visit from the police

Jennifer did not sleep well that night. She woke up feeling tired and unhappy. When she arrived at Dr Gibson's surgery, she looked into the waiting-room. It was nearly full. Another busy morning, she said to herself. Just then she heard the doctor's car outside. He hurried in and went into his room.

Three hours later he finished with his last patient. Jennifer brought a cup of coffee and put it on Dr Gibson's desk. He said thanks and she turned to go.

'Er - just a minute,' he called after her, 'I want a word with you.' He sounded a little cross. 'There was a phone call for you this morning - about an hour ago. You were busy at the time so I answered it.'

'Oh, who was it?'

'Let me see - I wrote it down somewhere.' He began to move the papers on his desk. 'She said that she was a friend of your brother's.'

'My brother? But why did she want me?'

'Ah, here it is.' He gave Jennifer a piece of paper. On it was a name - Wendy. 'She didn't leave a number. She'll call you again at home.'

Jennifer looked at the name. Wendy?... Wendy who? she asked herself.

'Thank you, Dr Gibson,' she said.

'And tell her, please, no phone calls during surgery hours.'

'I'm sorry. It won't happen again.' Jennifer wanted to explain that she did not know this Wendy but decided not to. A few minutes later Dr Gibson shouted goodbye to her and Jennifer was alone. She knew a few of Richard's friends but nobody called Wendy. But Richard changed his girlfriends as often as his shirts! Jennifer did not try to remember all their names.

At the end of the day Jennifer arrived at her flat and was going up the stairs when she heard voices above. Two men were standing outside her door. One of them came up to her. 'Miss Walton?' he asked. 'My name's Detective Barrett. I'd like to ask you a few questions, please. Can we come in?'

She turned the key in the lock and pushed open the door, and all three of them went inside and sat down.

'It's about Mr Richard Walton. He's your brother, I think,' Barrett began. He spoke softly but he had a hard voice, cold and unfriendly, and his light blue eyes never left Jennifer's face. 'When did you last see him?'

Jennifer told him.

'And before that?'

'I'm not sure - about three or four weeks ago.'

Those light blue eyes were still on her. She was beginning to feel uncomfortable.

'You didn't see him last weekend, then?'

'No.'

'Try to remember - did he come here last Saturday? In the evening?'

'No.'

'You're sure?'

'Yes, of course I'm sure.'

Barrett's voice became a little louder. 'You didn't meet him in some other place? At the airport perhaps?'

'No, I didn't. I haven't seen him for nearly a month, I tell you. Until last night, I mean.'

'Last night...' Barrett said after her. 'Tell us more about last night. You took a man to hospital... from Maxim's restaurant.'

'Yes.'

'A friend of yours?'

'I never saw him in my life before. He fell and hurt himself. They said that he had a bad heart so I went to the hospital with him. That's all.'

'You never saw him before? You surprise me, Miss Walton.' Barrett was watching her carefully. 'You didn't know that he was Mr Joe Kelly, your brother's boss?'

'No, I didn't.'

'Really? You didn't know him? Very strange, don't you think?'

All these questions - she was feeling angry now. She stood up and went across to Barrett. 'Look, Detective Barrett, I'm getting tired of this. What's it all about? You want me to answer your questions and you don't tell me why. What's the matter - I want to know. Is Richard in trouble?'

Barrett held up his hands. 'All right, take it easy.' He gave a little smile but his eyes were cold and he was still looking hard at Jennifer. The other detective said something quietly to Barrett. Then Barrett went on, 'Your brother - what do you know about his girlfriend?'

'His girlfriend?'

'Yes, Wendy. He works with her at Joe Kelly's.'

Wendy! The mystery telephone call at the surgery that morning! Jennifer tried to hide her surprise. She looked first at Barrett, then at the other man. Then she said coldly, 'Richard doesn't talk to me about his girlfriends.'

'He's told you about Wendy, I'm sure. They're very friendly, the two of them. They went to Germany together.' He turned to the other man. 'Last weekend, wasn't it?'

The second detective moved a little nearer and spoke quietly to Barrett. 'She doesn't know anything about this. You'll have to explain it to her.'

Barrett turned to Jennifer again. 'We're looking for some stolen jewellery, from Germany. And we believe that your brother knows something about it. You won't like this, Miss Walton, but your brother works for a criminal, a thief, and one of these days he's going to find himself in trouble.'

'But my brother lost his job yesterday. He told me last night. So he doesn't work for this man anymore.'

Barrett smiled. 'Perhaps he doesn't... or perhaps he wants people to think that he doesn't work for Kelly.' He went on. 'If you don't want to see your brother in prison, tell him to keep away from Kelly. And from beautiful young girls like Wendy.'

Jennifer looked at him and said nothing.

Barrett stood up. He looked at the other man and they both moved to the door. Jennifer followed and opened it for them.

'Good night, Miss Walton. Thanks for your help.'

They walked to the top of the stairs. Jennifer waited for a few seconds, then went inside and closed the door.

Oh Richard, she thought. What is happening? What are you doing? Why can't you stay out of trouble?

She telephoned Richard's flat, but there was no answer. So she went to bed, and worried half the night about her young brother.

The next day, Saturday, she worked only in the morning. When Dr Gibson's surgery finished, she went home to have lunch. Then she planned to go round to Richard's flat and talk to him. But when she got into her flat, the telephone was ringing. She ran across the room and answered it.

'Hello, is that Jennifer Walton?' someone asked. It was a girl's voice.

'Yes, Jennifer here. Who's speaking?'

The caller was silent for a second or two, then said, 'You don't know me, but I'm a friend of your brother's. Are you free just now? I need to see you. It's important.' She went on quickly. 'I'm just round the corner from your flat. Can I come up? I'll be there in three minutes.' And she put the phone down.

Jennifer was waiting at the door when her visitor arrived. She looked at her in surprise. She knew that face. It was the young girl from Maxim's, but without the gold earrings today.

The girl was also surprised. 'I saw you at Maxim's on Thursday night,' she said. 'You took Joe Kelly to hospital. Are you Jennifer, Richard's sister?'

'Yes,' said Jennifer. She looked at her visitor, and began to put two and two together. 'And you must be Wendy.'

'Yes,' the girl said.

Jennifer stood back, and the girl went inside. They sat down and Jennifer looked at the girl coldly. So this was Richard's girlfriend... who worked for the criminal, Joe Kelly. She had a beautiful little face and looked very unhappy, but Jennifer did not want to like her.

'What do you want to see me about?' she asked.

'It's difficult to explain,' the girl began. She looked unhappily at Jennifer's unfriendly face. 'You see, Richard has told me about you. He says that you're very kind... you always help him. He gave me your phone numbers and

said...' She stopped, and Jennifer waited. 'He said that I could ask you for help.'

Jennifer smiled to herself. Always the kind big sister, she thought. She looked at the girl's small, worried face.

'Well, go on, then,' she said more kindly. 'Tell me all about it. I hope that Richard's not in trouble.'

'You see, I work for Joe Kelly,' Wendy began. She talked for a long time, and Jennifer listened carefully.

This was Wendy's story.

CHAPTER THREE

Wendy's story

Kelly is not a nice man, and I've never liked him. I've worked for him for a year now. My father got the job for me - he told me to work hard and not to ask questions. Kelly often gets angry, and when he's angry, he shouts at everyone and his face goes very red. I'm afraid of him, but I don't want to lose my job. I need the money and it's not easy to find another job.

Richard started work at Kelly's about a month ago. We're good friends, but we don't talk much about our jobs. Nobody at Kelly's talks about the work. We don't really know what his business is. He has two garages in the town and he buys and sells old cars. But he also buys and sells a lot of other things, too - furniture, old pictures, jewellery. I think that some of these things are stolen, but I don't ask questions.

Ten days ago Kelly called me into his office. I stood there and waited. He began to say something to me, but he stopped and looked down at his papers. Then he took out his diary and opened it.

'Wendy, what are you doing next weekend?'

'I'm not sure, Mr Kelly.'

'How would you like to go on a little business trip? I'll pay you for it, of course.'

This surprised me, and I did not reply immediately. Then I said, 'A business trip, Mr Kelly?'

'Yes, to Germany... just for the day. It isn't a difficult job but it's important. What do you say?'

I did not know much about Mr Kelly's business, but I did know that there was something strange about these journeys to other countries. They happened every two or three months, and after them there were secret meetings in the office, often late in the evening. I decided that I did not want to go.

'But... but I've never been to Germany. Don't you think... well, perhaps you can ask one of the others.'

'I'm asking you, Wendy. I said that it was important and I want you to do it.' I began to say something but he was still speaking. 'I have friends in Frankfurt and they want to send me some things. They'll give you three small boxes, like egg boxes, and you'll bring them back here. There's nothing difficult about that, is there?'

I didn't say anything.

'Are you listening to me, Wendy?' he asked. 'I need you to do this job for me.' His voice was getting louder now.

I looked him in the face. 'I'm... I'm sorry, Mr Kelly. I've just remembered. I'm busy next weekend. I can't do it.'

He jumped up and his chair fell back. 'Now, just you listen to me, young woman. You work for me, remember that. I'm the person who pays you.' He caught my arm and shook me. This time I'm telling you, not asking you. You'll

go to Frankfurt or there'll be trouble. You will leave on the first plane on Saturday morning and come back the same evening. With the three boxes. And don't say a word to anyone, do you understand?'

Then he walked out.

I didn't sleep much that night. Or the next. I wanted to tell Richard but he was out of town on another of Kelly's jobs. What could I do? I was afraid, and Kelly knew that I was afraid. He did not speak about it again but on Friday he called me into his office and gave me my plane ticket and some money. There was no escape.

Saturday morning came, and I went to the airport. While I was waiting there, I heard my name. I knew that voice immediately. I turned round. 'Richard!' I cried. 'Oh Richard, I'm so pleased to see you. But what are you doing here?'

'I'm coming with you. To Frankfurt. Kelly told me to. Look, here's my ticket.'

'You mean... Wait a minute. What did Kelly tell you?'

Richard was smiling. 'He told me to come with you, that's all. To stay with you... you know, on the plane... and in Frankfurt.'

I began to understand. 'He told you to watch me, you mean.'

When we were on the plane, Richard asked me about my work at Kelly's. He knew very little about Kelly's business and he knew very little about our trip to Frankfurt. I

told him about the 'egg' boxes and why I was afraid. 'The boxes are small, Kelly said, so I think it's jewellery,' I told Richard. 'And I think... I think it's stolen jewellery.'

Then Richard got very angry, and said, 'Kelly can't send you on a job like this. Why doesn't he go himself?'

'But that's it, Richard. It's easier for a girl - Kelly knows that. He's clever, you know. But he thinks I'm afraid. So he's sent you to watch me.'

For a time Richard just sat there, and thought. After a while he turned to me. 'You're not going to do it - you're not going to carry stolen jewellery for that man. Leave it to me. I'll think of something, of some plan.' Then he was silent again.

When we arrived in Frankfurt, we went to a hotel for breakfast. Then Richard went off to buy a newspaper, and after that we sat around for about half an hour.

We had to meet Kelly's friends outside the hotel. When we walked out of the door, two men were waiting for us in a white Mercedes. We drove through the busy streets of the city and then into the country. Sometime later we stopped at an old house with trees all around it. We all went inside and the men took us into a dark room at the back and left us there. It was cold and Richard gave me his coat. He was smiling quietly to himself.

We waited there in silence. In another room people were talking. We could hear their voices. Then the driver of the Mercedes came and took us upstairs. A short man in a dark green shirt was sitting at a desk. In front of him on the

desk were three boxes. He was playing with a pen and watching us carefully. Richard spoke to him in German. I did not understand, but I heard Kelly's name and the man in the green shirt began to say something.

All at once there were noises outside, the sound of cars and voices and people running. The man jumped up from his desk and pulled a gun out of his pocket. He tried to get to the window but at that minute the door opened and three or four policemen ran in and jumped on him. There was a fight, but the police got his gun from him and held him on the floor. An older man arrived, a police inspector with grey hair, and began to give orders to the policemen. He called across the room to Richard and me in very good English, 'Are you all right? They didn't hurt you, did they?'

He gave some more orders and then he came across to Richard and held out his hand. 'Well done, young man. I must thank you for your help.' He turned to me. 'And thank you too. You've done very well, both of you. It's been a good day's work for all of us.'

I looked at Richard and he gave me a little smile. 'What does he mean?' I asked, but Richard did not answer.

The inspector then explained to me. 'Your friend phoned us this morning from your hotel. After that it was easy. We just waited near the hotel for the white Mercedes and then followed it here.'

The inspector took us back into Frankfurt in his car and when we arrived there, we went at once to his office. He ordered coffee for us and while we were waiting for it, he

said, 'You've helped us a lot already but we need your help with one more thing. There's still Mr Kelly... and his friends. We have a plan for them.' Oh yes, he knew all about Joe Kelly.

He brought out the three boxes and put them on the table in front of us. Then he said, 'We would like you to take these back to England with you.'

Richard and I looked at him in surprise.

The inspector waited for a minute and then went on, 'You don't need to be afraid. Perhaps you're thinking about the British police, is that it? Everything will be all right. I will speak to Chief Superintendent Edwards in London, and there'll be no trouble for you. Now listen carefully.' He went on. 'Just give the jewellery to Kelly. He won't know about the "accident" to his German friends, and you must not tell anybody about it, or about our conversation today. That's very important. The British police will watch Kelly and wait. Do you understand?'

This plan sounded dangerous to me but Richard said, 'Yes, of course we'll do it, won't we, Wendy?' Richard is not afraid of Kelly, you see.

So we brought the boxes back with us on the Saturday evening plane from Frankfurt. We did not get back until nearly midnight but we took the boxes at once to Kelly's house. He told us to wait and then went into another room. When he came back, he was very happy. He put his hand in his pocket and took out some gold ear-rings. 'These are for you, Wendy - for your birthday next Thursday.'

'No, Mr Kelly, no, you mustn't. I can't take them, really I can't.'

'Of course you can,' Kelly laughed. 'You've worked hard for them. And we must have a party for you. Let's get some people together on Thursday night. Where would you like to go? To the Ritz? Or perhaps a disco? No, I know...', and he began to sing:

Let's all meet at Maxim's,
We'll have a wonderful time.

I told him three times that I didn't want a party but he didn't want to listen. He was too pleased with himself. 'Oh, yes, Wendy. We must have a party. And you must wear the earrings. Then I'll know you're my good little girl.' His mouth was smiling but his eyes were cold.

Richard said quietly in my ear, 'Just agree with him, Wendy. And take his ear-rings - you can give them back later. We don't want anything to go wrong now.'

The next few days passed very slowly. On Monday and Tuesday everything was quiet in the office. Kelly did not speak to me again about the visit to Frankfurt. He stayed in his office most of the time and was always on the telephone. No police came to the office, and nothing happened. I began to feel afraid.

Early on Wednesday morning Richard called in to see me. 'Is he in yet?' he asked. He looked at Kelly's door.

'Not yet. Why?'

'I want the keys to his office. Just for a minute.'

'But Richard...'

'Come on, Wendy, he'll never know.'

'You can't go in there, Richard. He'll be here in a minute - it's too dangerous.'

'Please, Wendy. It won't take long. I'll be out again immediately.'

'But why... what do you want?'

'Don't ask questions. Just give me the keys - quickly.'

Of course in the end I gave him the keys. He opened Kelly's door and went inside. Some minutes passed and then he gave a shout. I think I've got something!

I went in and saw that Richard was standing in front of Kelly's desk with a letter in his hand. He held it up for me. 'This', he said, 'is going to help us.'

'What do you mean?' I did not understand.

'Listen.' He read from the letter... the eggs arrived last weekend and they are now in my house. Be there on 18th April, 11 a.m.

'The 18th,' I said. 'That's next Saturday.'

Just then I heard a car outside. 'That's him,' I cried. 'Quick, put that letter back. You must get out of here at once.'

I ran through to my office with Richard behind me. 'Out there - quick.' I pushed him into the kitchen and at the same time the door opened and Kelly walked in.

'Good morning, Wendy.' He did not stop but went into his office and closed the door behind him.

Richard then quickly left the office and I did not see him again that day. He phoned me the next afternoon, which was Thursday. I knew at once that he was unhappy about something.

'What's happened, Richard?' I asked.

'I'm not working for Kelly anymore,' he told me. This morning Kelly told me to do another of his little jobs for him, and I said no. So he started shouting at me, and then he told me to go. So that's it - I'm looking for another job.' He gave a little laugh. 'And worse than that, he hasn't paid me, and now I can't buy you a birthday present.'

'Oh Richard, that's not important,' I said. 'But are you coming to Kelly's party for me at Maxim's tonight? I won't go without you. You must come.'

'I can't, Wendy. I'd like to be there, you know that. But we mustn't meet until after Saturday.'

'Why not? What's happening on Saturday? And what's happening about the... the egg boxes? What are the police doing? Kelly says I must wear my new gold ear-rings at the party, but I don't want to. They came from Frankfurt in one of those egg boxes, and they're stolen! Oh Richard, I'm afraid! What am I going to do?'

'Everything's going to be all right, Wendy. Really. I've got a plan. Just go to the party, and don't worry. I'll see you soon.'

Richard put the phone down, and I have not seen or heard from him since then.

CHAPTER FOUR

Another birthday present

Jennifer felt very sorry for Wendy. The girl's hands were shaking, and she was trying not to cry. Jennifer went and sat next to her, and put her arm round her.

'So what happened after the party on Thursday night, when the police took you away?' she asked quietly.

'Oh, it was terrible!' Wendy said. 'They took the earrings from me, of course, and they asked a lot of questions. I told them that the ear-rings were a present from Kelly, and I told them all about the police in Germany, but they didn't believe me. They told me to go to the office on Friday, and not to say anything to anybody. And they wanted to talk to Richard.'

Wendy turned to Jennifer. 'What am I going to do?' she asked. 'Why didn't the police believe me? Haven't the German police talked to them? And where's Richard? I can't find him.' She began to cry quietly.

Jennifer stood up. 'We must phone the police in Germany,' she said. 'I'll talk to that policeman, Barrett, who came to see me last night, and...'

Just then there was a knock on the door. Jennifer went to the door and called out, 'Who is it?'

'It's me! Richard!' came Richard's excited voice.

Jennifer opened the door quickly. Beside Richard there were two policemen - Barrett and another, taller man.

'Everything's OK,' Richard said happily. He turned to the two policemen and smiled. 'And you're not going to lock me up, are you?'

'I'm very pleased to hear that!' said Jennifer. 'But what's going on? Can somebody please explain?'

They all went into the sitting-room, and Wendy jumped up. She looked at the policemen and her face went white. Everybody began talking at once, and Richard put his arms round Wendy.

The tall policeman laughed and turned to Jennifer. 'My name is Edwards,' he said. 'I'm sorry about Barrett's visit to you last night, but we didn't know about Richard and Wendy then. I talked to the Frankfurt police an hour ago. We already knew about the stolen jewellery in Germany, of course, and we were watching Kelly. But they didn't tell us that they caught the German thieves last weekend, or about their little plan with Richard and Wendy. They wanted to keep it very secret. They were afraid that Kelly would hear about it. But we know now, and everything's all right.'

'But what about Kelly?' cried Wendy. 'And the egg boxes...?'

Barrett smiled. 'You'll have to find a new boss. Kelly is going to be in prison for a long time. We got him this morning. But it's Richard's story. He's been very helpful to us. He can tell you all about it.'

The two policemen left, and Jennifer turned to her young brother. He was sitting with his arm round Wendy, and her face was now bright and happy.

'Well!' Jennifer said. 'Start talking, Richard!'

'I've told Jennifer all about last week,' Wendy explained. 'And she was in Maxim's on Thursday night. But what happened this morning?'

Richard laughed. 'When I looked in Kelly's office last Wednesday, I found that letter about the "eggs". You remember, Wendy? Well, the German policeman told us to do nothing, but I wanted the British police to catch Kelly. Perhaps they were watching Kelly carefully, but I wanted to be sure. So early this morning I went to the police station and told them about the letter. They were not very friendly and they kept me in the police station. But they went to Kelly's house at eleven o'clock. They found Kelly there and two other men, who were buying the stolen jewellery from Kelly. So they brought Kelly and the two other men into the police station... and the egg boxes, of course. Kelly was very angry, and told the police that Wendy and I were the thieves! I told Barrett and Edwards about the German policeman's plan again and again, and in the end they telephoned Germany and talked to the inspector in Frankfurt. He explained everything. So here we are!'

Richard laughed again, happily. He put his hands in his pockets. 'And here's twenty pounds for my big sister, and a little birthday present for my favourite girl.'

Jennifer looked at him. She suddenly felt very happy about her brother. 'You can keep the money,' she said. 'It's not important. But I only gave it to you on Thursday night,' she said. 'How...?'

'I've got a new job,' said Richard. 'Started yesterday. And this time I'm not working for a jewellery thief!'

Wendy opened her present, and laughed for the first time that day. 'Oh look!' she said. 'It's some gold earrings! They're lovely.'

Richard laughed too. 'They're only small ear-rings, Wendy, but I can tell you this - they did not come from Frankfurt in an egg box!'

- THE END -

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