

DEAD SCARED

An illustration of a cardboard box filled with British £20 banknotes, with several more banknotes scattered on a textured, grey background. The banknotes are shown in various orientations, some crumpled and some flat. The background has a subtle, repeating pattern of the number '20'.

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by

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About the Author



I still enjoy writing about Four Eyes Everywhere (Pippsy and Jack Standage), and I try to set the books in areas I know. Anyone who knows Buckinghamshire will exercise their mind attempting to recognize where the locations are, as some of the names have been changed! Friends and family tell me I have a twisted mind – so be it.

Chapter One

With the best will in the world I didn't fancy getting out of bed. We'd had a late night, not exactly our own fault of course: more the fault of a DVD lent to us by Aggie saying we would enjoy it enormously. Which we did – but it was a long film.

"Oh Lor'," I thought, "and we've got to meet a prospective client at eleven o'clock." It was now easing its way to half past seven. I'd have given anything to roll over and go back to sleep, so I rolled. Out of bed!

"Come on sunshine," I gave Jack a shake. Looking half dead he also rolled.

By the time we'd swallowed tea and toast we felt more normal.

"Tell you what," he said. "After we've seen Mrs. What's her name, we'll pop out for a spot of lunch. Good idea?"

"One of your better ones," I told him.

We organised ourselves, and left Aggie in charge. We were on our way by half past ten. Mrs. What's her name or more properly Mrs. Evan-Davies lived nearby in Beaconsfield. The roads were not busy so we took it easy. When we arrived, we both gasped 'wow'!

The house was grandiose and set well back from the road. We parked and just sat looking for a moment.

Jack muttered "Wow" again! I muttered "Crumbs"!

"I'll be interested to meet this lady," Jack said. Me too, I thought.

There was a speakerphone by the gates. Jack pushed the button and said, "Four Eyes Everywhere for Mrs. Evan-Davies." There was no response but the gates opened slowly.

We drove onto a forecourt which would have comfortably held three large cars. We've been to a few posh homes in our time, and this was right up there with them.

A short flight of steps led to the front door, which swung open as we approached. The woman who appeared in the doorway was not what we were expecting. Slightly overweight and probably in her fifties, she was dressed in a very ordinary sweater and jeans. I wondered if she might be the housekeeper.

We all introduced ourselves, and were told to 'come in'. It was indeed Mrs. Evan-Davies but she didn't have much to say. We were led into a large comfortable sitting room and invited to sit down.

Well, we sat and waited. She didn't utter a word for several minutes. I was on the point of standing up, saying goodbye and heading for the door.

"I've heard good things about you," she said at last. I was astonished. It was not the cut-glass accent I was expecting: it was more South London perhaps. I wondered how long she'd been living here.

"You're thinking 'how can she be living in a house like this', aren't you?" We were speechless. It was what I'd been thinking anyway.

"What I'm going to tell you will knock your socks off. You interested?"

Were we? Not so as you'd notice I thought.

"My hubby and I have been here for two years. We came from Streatham. We've been married for twenty years and always lived there. Then about a year ago we came into some money. That's to say we won the lottery." She paused.

Yes I thought, our socks are well and truly knocked off.

"It wasn't the ordinary lottery," she went on. "A pal of my hubby was living in..., well never mind, let's just say it wasn't this country. He won the money, only he used our names."

I opened my mouth to ask the obvious question, but she cut in quickly, "It doesn't matter why he did. He just did. He was going to collect the money when he came back home, but he never came back. Just disappeared, so we thought, well it's in our names and as he's not around we might just as well use it. That's how we came to be here. We looked around various areas, and we liked what we saw here."

She sat back and stared at us.

"What exactly is it you need us for?" Jack said after a minute.

"It seems somebody else thinks the money belongs to them," she said. "We've been sent some messages, and they don't make for good reading. My hubby's been nosing about trying to find who's sending them, but he doesn't have the contacts any more. We heard about you from a friend, so we want you to sort things out for us. You up for it?"

We looked at each other. I didn't care for the sound of any of this: and who could the friend be?

Jack pursed his lips. "We'll have to think it over Mrs. Evan-Davies. And we'll need to talk to your husband."

She said, "I get where you're coming from. Can you come again in say, two days? My hubby's away until then."

"That's fine," Jack told her. "But we're going to need more information than you have given us. Please tell your husband. Oh, and by the way, we'd be interested to know just who the 'friend' is."

He stood up and I followed.

'Dead Scared'

"I'll call you day after tomorrow when my hubby's back. Let me show you out." The gracious hostess all of a sudden I thought.

Once back in the car Jack said, "What d'you think?"

"I don't know really," I told him. "But one thing I do know is it sounds dodgy."