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Level 2

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A Little Trouble in Amsterdam

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People in the story

Mary Lawson: a fourteen-year-old girl; Andy Lawson's twin sister

Andy Lawson: a fourteen-year-old boy; Mary Lawson's twin brother

Ellen Lawson: Andy and Mary's mother

Peter van Noordwyk: a Dutch businessman

Jake: a robber

Os: another robber

Inspector Kompier: a Dutch police officer

BEFORE YOU READ



1 Look at the pictures in the first two chapters. Answer the questions.

1 Who is with Andy and Mary in Amsterdam?

.....

2 What do Andy and Mary do?

.....

The empty house

‘Come on, Mary!’ said Andy. ‘Look at the time. We’ve got to get back to the hotel. Mum said eight o’clock at the latest. It’s almost that now.’

‘Just a minute,’ said Mary. ‘I want to see what’s in here. Quick!’ She took her brother by the hand and pulled him through the half-open front door of a house.

‘Hey ...’ began Andy. ‘Mary, what are you doing? We can’t go in here. This is someone’s house.’

Sometimes he couldn’t believe the things his sister did. She was always getting them into trouble¹ – and he usually had to get them out.



Andrew, always called Andy, and Mary Lawson were spending the evening walking round the streets of Amsterdam near their hotel. They were on the Lijnbaansgracht when Mary saw the half-open door and pulled her brother inside.

They looked round the room in the half light of the evening.

‘Well, no one’s living here,’ said Mary. ‘But look – there are builders working here. Maybe they just forgot to shut the door.’ There was no furniture in the room, just a lot of builders’ things. ‘Let’s have a look round,’ she said. ‘It’ll be interesting to see inside a Dutch house.’

‘Mary!’ said Andy. ‘What if someone comes?’

‘No one’s going to come,’ said Mary.

‘But Mum’s going to be really angry if we’re not back,’ said Andy. ‘She’ll just say that we can’t go out any more without her. Then we’ll have to stay in the hotel all the time and that’ll be really boring.’

‘OK, OK,’ said Mary. ‘You’re right, as usual.’

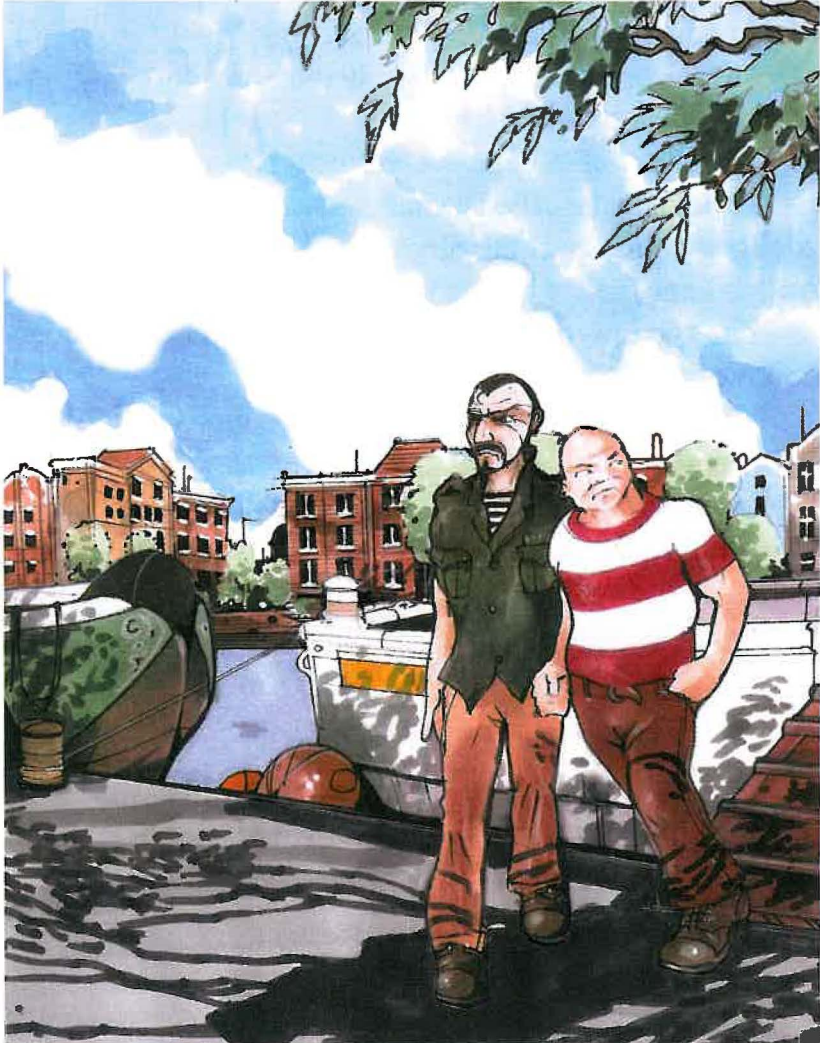
Andy turned and started to go out of the door, but suddenly he stopped and pushed Mary back into the room.

‘Someone’s outside,’ he said very quietly.

Together they looked through the half-open door, careful that no one could see them. It wasn’t their house: they didn’t want anyone to ask them what they were doing there.

Amsterdam is an unusual city. It has streets, houses, shops, restaurants and cinemas, like other cities; but, because it is very flat, it has lots and lots of bicycles and not so many cars; and it also has a lot of canals and a lot of boats on the canals.

Lijnbaansgracht is really the name of the canal. There is a narrow² street with houses down one side of the canal, and the backs of some houses down the other side. And there was now a boat tied up outside the house that Mary and Andy were in. Two men were getting off the boat. One of the men was short but very big. He had a neck like a bull, fingers like



large bananas, and almost no hair. He looked strong. The other man was taller but, not so wide.³ He had long hair tied back behind his head. He looked strong too.

The shorter man stayed near the boat; the tall one walked across to the houses. Mary and Andy moved back behind the door, but the man didn't come in. They heard the noise of a door opening. He was going into the house next door. Mary and Andy looked through the door again.

After a few moments they heard the short man call across to the house.

'Jake,' he said. 'Jake, is everything OK?'

'Fine, Os,' Jake called back.

They were speaking English but not like Mary and Andy's English. It sounded strange: the pronunciation was different. Jake went back and then he and Os went down into the boat.

'Let's go,' said Andy, starting to go out of the door and onto the street.

But Mary put out a hand and pulled him back.

'No. Wait,' she said. 'They're coming out again.'



Jake and Os came back out of the boat carrying something. Andy and Mary couldn't see what it was, but it was large and quite difficult to carry. It was tall and wide and quite thin, and there was cloth⁴ all round it so you couldn't see what it was. The men looked up and down the street carefully. It seemed that they didn't want anyone to see them.

'OK?' asked Os. 'Is anyone coming?'

'No,' said Jake. 'Let's go.'

Almost running, the men came quickly across the street and into the house next door.

'Now,' said Andy.

'OK,' said Mary.

The teenagers ran out through the door of the empty house and turned left down the street. They didn't look back. At the end of the street they turned the corner and Andy looked at his watch.

'We're really late now,' he said. 'Mum will kill us.'

Their hotel wasn't far away. They ran quickly in through the front door and up the stairs to their room. Andy already had the key in his hand when they got to the door.

He looked at Mary.

'What are we going to say to Mum?' he asked.

'She'll be all right,' said Mary. 'She won't mind.' But she didn't really think so.

Andy gave her a disbelieving look and opened the door.

Chapter 2

Mum, we've got something to tell you

Mary and Andy walked into their hotel room. It was a large room with three beds, a sofa and two chairs, a table, a desk and a large wardrobe. The room was empty. Andy looked in the bathroom. No one was there.

'She's not here,' he said.

'Quick!' said Mary, turning on the TV. 'Make it look like we've been here for a long time.'

Andy took off his trainers and his sweatshirt and sat down on the sofa. There was a big mirror above the table on one side of the room. He looked at himself. He was fourteen and already more than 175 centimetres tall. He had short red hair and blue eyes. Sometimes, at school, people made fun of his hair because of its colour. He didn't mind – there were worse things than having red hair.

He looked at his sister, Mary, sitting across the room watching TV. She was fourteen as well – they were twins,⁵ but she didn't look like him at all. She was a few centimetres shorter than him. She had long dark hair and big brown eyes. She was wearing jeans and a black T-shirt.

'Where do you think Mum is?' asked Andy.

But he didn't get an answer. They heard a key in the lock and Ellen Lawson, their mother, came into the room.

Ellen Lawson had short dark hair, brown eyes and was shorter than both her children. She was carrying a large bag,



which she threw on one of the beds.

‘Hi, you two,’ she called. ‘How are you? Have you had a good time? Where have you been?’

‘Where have *you* been?’ asked Mary. She was using a deep⁶ voice like her mother’s. She sounded a little angry like her mother sometimes did.

Andy quickly got the idea.

‘Yes, mother,’ he said, waving a finger at her. ‘What time do you call this?’

‘All right, all right,’ laughed Ellen Lawson. ‘I know I’m a bit late but I got talking to Peter and—’

‘Ah! Peter,’ said Mary, ‘and who *is* this Peter? I think we need to know, Mother.’

Ellen laughed again.

‘You know who Peter is. Mr Van Noordwyk, the man I’m working for here in Amsterdam. And, as it’s our first day here, he’s going to take us out for dinner. All three of us. Now put some shoes on and we’ll go and find him. He’s waiting for us in a restaurant just round the corner.’

Quickly, Andy started pulling his trainers back on and Ellen turned to open the door. Mary looked at Andy and put her thumb up in the air. They were going to be OK. Mum didn’t know about them being late. Andy smiled.

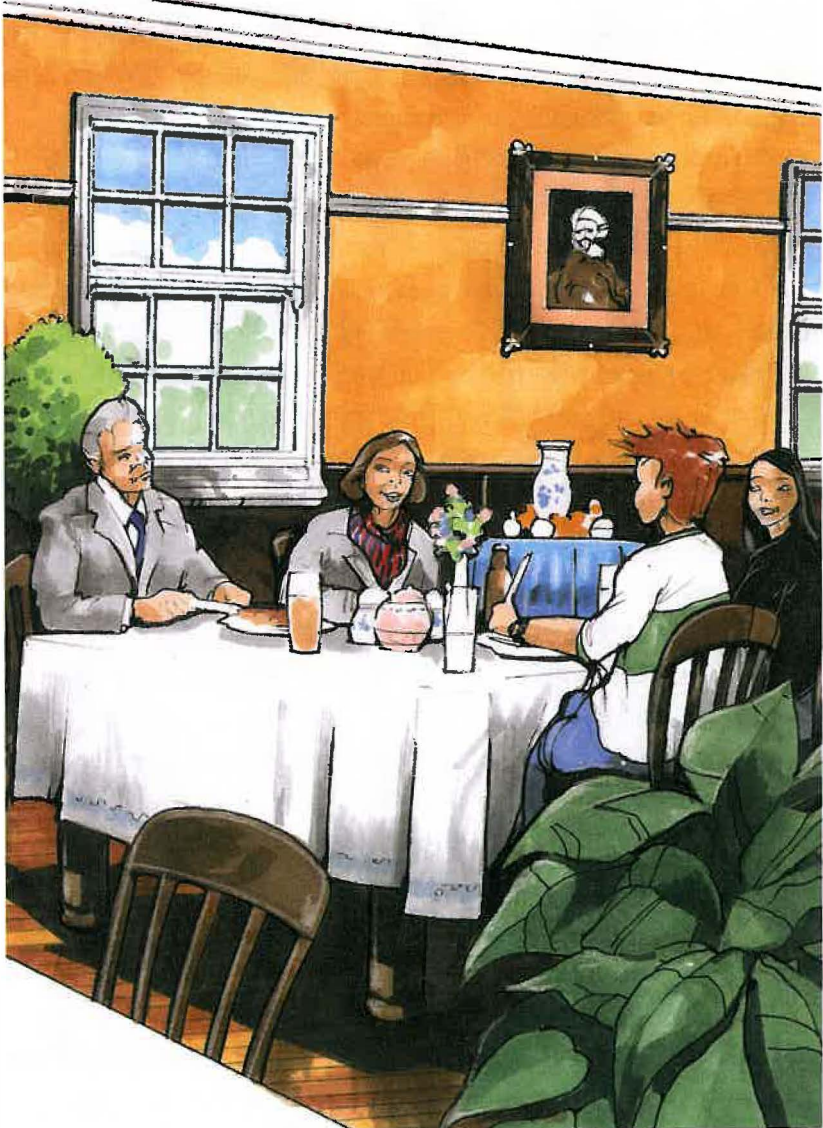
* * *

Peter van Noordwyk was waiting in the Van Loon Steak House, two minutes’ walk from the hotel. He stood up as the Lawsons came into the restaurant. He was a short man, a little bit taller than Ellen Lawson, but shorter than Andy. He had grey hair and an expensive grey suit.⁷

'Hello, you two,' he said, smiling at Andy and Mary. 'It's nice to meet you. I've heard a lot about you.'

'All good, I hope,' said Mary, looking at her mother.

Peter van Noordwyk and Ellen Lawson both laughed.



Over dinner Van Noordwyk talked to Mary and Andy about their schools in England and then asked them what they were thinking of doing in Amsterdam.

'We'll probably go to some museums and maybe see a film one afternoon,' answered Mary.

'And of course Mum told us to bring some school work too,' said Andy, 'which was very boring of her.' But he was smiling at his mother as he said it.

Van Noordwyk laughed again.

'Well, on Saturday I'm going out on my boat,' he said. 'You could all come along with me for the day if you like.'

'Oh, yes, please,' said Mary and Andy together. They looked at their mother. 'Can we, Mum? Please!' they said.

Ellen smiled and looked at Van Noordwyk. 'That's very kind of you,' she said. 'We'd love to come.'

'Do you often travel with your mum when she's working?' asked Van Noordwyk.

'Only if Dad's not at home,' replied Mary. 'He's in California on business at the moment and Mum doesn't want to leave us at home on our own.'⁸

'Well, she doesn't want to leave *Mary* at home on her own,' said Andy.

'Now, now,' said Ellen Lawson. 'Peter's been kind enough to bring us out for dinner and invite us out for the day – the last thing he wants is to listen to you two fighting.'

'Sorry, Mum,' said Andy, smiling. 'But it's true, isn't it?'

* * *

The next morning Ellen, Mary and Andy were all getting dressed in the hotel room. The television was on. You can

get British TV in the Netherlands, so the BBC *Breakfast Time* news was on.

‘In a robbery yesterday afternoon at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, robbers escaped with a painting by Rembrandt. The painting cost the museum £23 million four years ago and is an excellent and unusual example of Rembrandt’s early work. Police do not yet know how the robbers got in and out of the museum and they are asking the public to help with any information. And now to sport ...’

Mary and Andy looked at each other. Ellen Lawson turned off the TV.

‘Well,’ she said, ‘a robbery just down the road from us. That doesn’t happen every day. The Rijksmuseum’s only about ten minutes walk from here. Anyway, come on. Let’s go and have some breakfast.’

As they walked down the stairs to the dining room, Andy looked at Mary.

‘Do you think ...’ he asked.

‘Yes,’ she replied. Sometimes she and Andy knew exactly what the other one was thinking. Perhaps it was because they were twins.

‘What are you talking about?’ asked Ellen, looking from one to the other.

‘Well?’ asked Andy.

‘Well what?’ asked Ellen.

‘I think we have to,’ replied Mary.

‘What’s all this about?’ asked Ellen.

‘Mum,’ said Andy. ‘We’ve got something to tell you.’

LOOKING BACK

- 1 Check your answers to *Before you read* on page 4.

ACTIVITIES

- 2 Underline the correct words in each sentence.

- 1 Amsterdam *has / hasn't* got many cars.
- 2 The Lijnbaansgracht is a *river / canal*.
- 3 *Jake / Os* has got long hair.
- 4 Jake and Os carry something *out of / into* the house.
- 5 Andy and Mary are staying in a *house / hotel*.
- 6 Ellen is *working / on holiday* in Amsterdam.
- 7 You *can't / can* watch British TV in Amsterdam.
- 8 The robbery happened yesterday *morning / afternoon*.

- 3 Complete the sentences with the names in the box.

Mary (x2) Andy Ellen Peter (x2)

- 1*Mary*..... wants to go into the empty house.
- 2 sees someone outside the house.
- 3 is wearing a black T-shirt.
- 4 has got short dark hair.
- 5 is wearing expensive clothes.
- 6 has got a boat.

4 Are the sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- 1 It's eight o'clock in the morning at the start of the story.
- 2 The hotel is near the Lijnbaansgracht.
- 3 Os is not as tall as Jake.
- 4 The teenagers haven't got the key to their hotel room.
- 5 The teenagers get to the hotel before their mum.
- 6 The restaurant is a long way from the hotel.
- 7 Andy and Mary's father isn't at home.
- 8 The police know how the robbers got into the museum.

5 Answer the questions.

- 1 Why do Andy and Mary run back to the hotel?

Because they have to be back by eight o'clock.

- 2 Describe the family's hotel room.

- 3 Why is the family in Amsterdam?

- 4 Where is Andy and Mary's dad?

- 5 What have the robbers taken from the museum?

LOOKING FORWARD

6 Tick (✓) what you think happens in the next chapter.

- 1 Ellen doesn't believe Andy and Mary's story.
- 2 Ellen believes Andy and Mary's story and wants to go to the police.

Going to the police



‘You mustn’t be angry,’ said Mary, as they sat down at the breakfast table.

Ellen looked from Mary to Andy and back. She didn’t smile. What could this be about? She hoped Mary wasn’t getting them into trouble again.

Andy looked at her.

‘Are you going to be angry or not?’ he asked.

‘All right,’ said Ellen. ‘No, I won’t be angry.’

Andy and Mary told their mother about the evening before: about the empty house and about the men carrying something into the building next door.

‘I’m sure it was a painting, Mum,’ said Andy. ‘It was like this.’ And he put his arms out and moved them around to show her how big it was.

Ellen watched him, her finger on her lips. She wasn't sure what to think.

'Maybe it was something else,' she said. 'A table top? Or, I don't know, some other piece of furniture?'

'No, Mum,' said Mary. 'It wasn't that heavy. I'm sure it was a painting.'

'Come on,' their mother said. 'Really, you've no idea what it was, have you?'

'No, we don't know for certain,' said Andy. 'But we're both really sure it was a painting. And the men looked like robbers. They were very careful. They looked up and down the road before they took the painting out of the boat.'

'They were probably just looking to see that no cars were coming,' said Ellen.

'No, Mum,' said Mary. 'It seemed that they didn't want anyone to see them. In fact, one of them asked, "Is anyone coming?"'

'And they didn't walk across the road – they almost ran,' said Andy.

Ellen looked at them both. She loved her children and she liked them too. They didn't always do what she wanted, but they always told the truth.⁹

'Come on, Mum,' said Mary. 'We have to tell the police. We heard on the news that they're asking for information.'

Ellen looked at their faces. They certainly believed what they were saying. They thought these men were the robbers.

'OK,' she said. 'I'll call Peter's secretary and leave a message that I'm going to be late this morning, and then we'll go to the police.'

* * *

At the police station on Beursstraat, the officer on the front desk listened to their story and then took them to see an Inspector Kompier. Inspector Kompier was a young woman, wearing dark blue trousers and a white blouse. She spoke very good English and gave Mary and Andy a glass of lemonade each. She and Ellen drank coffee. Kompier wanted to know everything about the night before. She asked about the men. What did they look like? What were they wearing? What language did they speak? She asked about the boat. Was it long or short? What colour was it? Did they see the name of the boat? She asked about what the men were carrying. What did it look like? How big was it? Why did they think it was a painting?



Then she asked about the house.

‘Where is it?’ she asked. ‘What’s the address?’

Mary and Andy looked at each other.

‘I don’t know,’ said Andy. ‘I mean, I know where it is.’

It's near our hotel. And ...' He looked at Mary. 'I'm sure we could find it again.'

'Oh yes,' said Mary. 'We know where it is.'

Kompier thought for a moment.

'OK,' she said. 'Well, I'm very interested in everything you've told me so far. So I'd like you to wait a few minutes. I'm going to get some police officers together and then you can show me this house.'

* * *

Half an hour later there were two police cars outside the house on the Lijnbaansgracht and a police boat on the canal near them. Inspector Kompier, Ellen, Mary and Andy were standing near one of the cars; there were more police officers in the other car and on the boat.

Mary and Andy showed Kompier the house. She tried the bell and the door. It was locked and no one answered.

Kompier sent officers to other houses in the street to ask questions. While they were waiting, she talked to Ellen Lawson.

'Are you here on holiday?' she asked.

'No,' said Ellen. 'I'm working.'

Kompier looked at her questioningly.

'I'm working for a Dutch businessman. I'm an interior designer. He's just bought a new house and I'm helping him make it look nice inside. I'm going to choose the colours for the rooms, then decide what sort of furniture will look good: sofas, chairs, tables and so on.'

'Don't most people do that for themselves?' asked Kompier.

'Sure,' said Ellen. 'But some people aren't very good at it or they don't have the time.'

After about five minutes one of the officers came back up the street with an old man.

'This man has a key to the house,' the officer said to Kompier. 'He was a friend of the woman who lived here before and he still has a key from then. He says people stay in the house from time to time, but no one actually lives there.'

'Good work,' Kompier said to the officer. She looked at Andy and Mary: 'Is this one of the men you saw?' she asked.

'No,' said Andy. 'They were much younger.'

Kompier turned back to the old man.

'I'm Inspector Kompier of the Amsterdam police,' she said. 'I'd like you to open this door for us, please. We need to have a look round this house.'

'Well,' said the man. 'I'm not sure ...'

'We can all wait here while I get the right papers to go in,' said Kompier. 'And that could take two or three hours. Or you can open the door now and we can have a quick look round and you can be back home in twenty minutes.'

The old man looked at Kompier for a second or two. Then he took some keys out of his pocket.

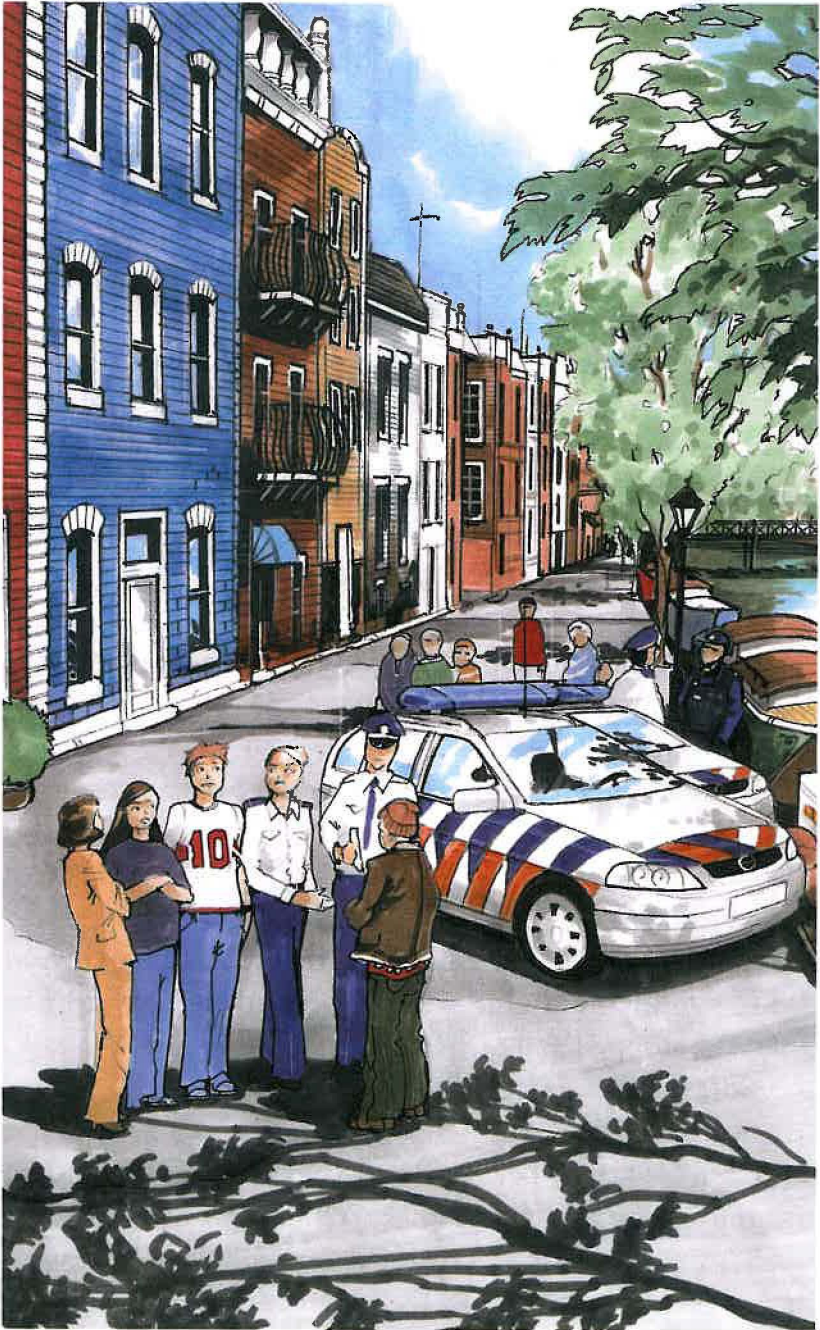
Kompier turned to the officer who found the old man.

'Take this man's name and find out what he knows about the house and anyone who uses it. Then stay out here with the family.'

She turned to the Lawsons.

'You wait here,' she said. 'I'll be back in a minute.' Then she entered the house, followed by her officers.

* * *



Twenty minutes later all the police officers were out on the street again. The old man locked the front door and walked away down the street.

'I'm afraid there's nothing there,' said Kompier to the Lawsons. 'We've looked everywhere.' She looked at Andy and Mary.

'Are you sure it's the right house?' she asked.

'Yes,' they both said together.

'Look,' said Andy, showing the inspector the half-open front door of the next house. 'That's where we were standing.'

'Well,' the inspector said, 'maybe you saw the painting and the robbers have already moved it somewhere else. Or maybe it wasn't the painting. You *did* say you couldn't see what it was.'

Mary opened her mouth to say something but then closed it. The inspector didn't want to believe them – that was fine. But something was worrying Mary and she didn't quite know what it was.

'Thank you, anyway,' said Kompier. 'Perhaps I can take you back to your hotel?'

'That's OK,' said Ellen. 'It's just round the corner from here. We'll walk.'

They started walking back to the hotel. Ellen Lawson didn't say anything until they got round the first corner. Then she stopped and turned to Mary and Andy.

'Sorry, Mum,' said Mary quickly.

'Yes, sorry,' said Andy.

Ellen looked at her children. They looked back at her, unsmiling. She couldn't be angry with them.

'It's OK,' she said. 'You were only saying what you saw. But ...' She started walking again. 'Well, come on,' she said.

'I've got to get to work.' Ellen walked on ahead, Mary and Andy a little way behind.

Mary started thinking again about the police officers looking in the house and then she knew what was worrying her.

'In the end that inspector didn't believe us,' said Mary quietly to Andy, 'because they didn't find the painting in the house.'

'So?' replied Andy.

'Well, they didn't find anything that looked like the painting either, did they?'

'Well, maybe the robbers took the "thing" away,' said Andy.

Mary made a rather angry noise. Andy got the feeling that she wasn't happy at all. He also got the feeling she wanted to do something about it.

'We've got to do something,' she said.

'Oh no!' thought Andy to himself. 'Here we go. More trouble.'

'Listen,' she said. 'We have to get into the house ourselves.'

LOOKING BACK

- 1 Check your answer to *Looking forward* on page 17.

ACTIVITIES

- 2 What do the underlined words refer to in these lines from the text?

- 1 'You mustn't be angry,' said Mary. (page 18) *Ellen*
- 2 Ellen looked at them both. (page 19)
- 3 'We know where it is.' (page 21)
- 4 'They were much younger.' (page 22)
- 5 'It's just round the corner from here.' (page 24)
.....
- 6 'We have to get into the house ourselves?' (page 25)
.....

- 3 Match the two parts of the sentences.

- 1 Andy is sure that b
- 2 Andy can't remember the address of the house but
- 3 Kompier wants to visit the house because
- 4 The house is locked but
- a he can take the police there.
- ~~b~~ the robbers were carrying a painting.
- c the police find someone with a key.
- d she is interested in the teenagers' story

4 Underline the correct words in each sentence.

- 1 Mary and Andy tell Ellen about the painting at *lunch / breakfast*.
- 2 Ellen thinks her children *are / aren't* telling the truth.
- 3 Kompier gives Andy and Mary *coffee / a cold drink*.
- 4 Two police *cars and a boat / boats and a car* go the house.
- 5 The old man *knew / didn't know* the woman who lived in the house.
- 6 The teenagers walk back to the hotel with *Kompier / Ellen*.
- 7 *Andy / Mary* thinks that the robbers took the painting away.

5 Answer the questions.

- 1 What time of day is it at the start of Chapter 3?
.....

- 2 What is Ellen going to tell Peter's secretary?
.....

- 3 Who has a key to the house?
.....

- 4 Who wants to take the family back to the hotel?
.....

- 5 What does Mary want to do at the end of Chapter 3?
.....

LOOKING FORWARD

.....

6 What do you think? Answer the questions.

- 1 Do Andy and Mary find the painting?
.....

- 2 Who finds them in the house?
.....

Looking for the painting

‘We can’t do this,’ said Andy. ‘We can’t just walk into somebody’s house.’

It was two o’clock in the afternoon. Ellen Lawson was at work. She thought that Mary and Andy were at the cinema. But they weren’t.

‘Of course we can,’ said Mary. ‘We have to.’

She and Andy were back on the Lijnbaansgracht. The street was empty. There was a new boat a little way along the canal, but they couldn’t see anyone in it.

‘The police don’t believe us about the painting,’ said Mary. ‘We have to look in the house. It must be in there somewhere.’

‘But what if someone finds us?’ said Andy.

‘They won’t.’

‘What if the police decide to come back and have another look?’ asked Andy.

‘They won’t. They don’t believe us,’ said Mary.

‘We haven’t got the key,’ said Andy.

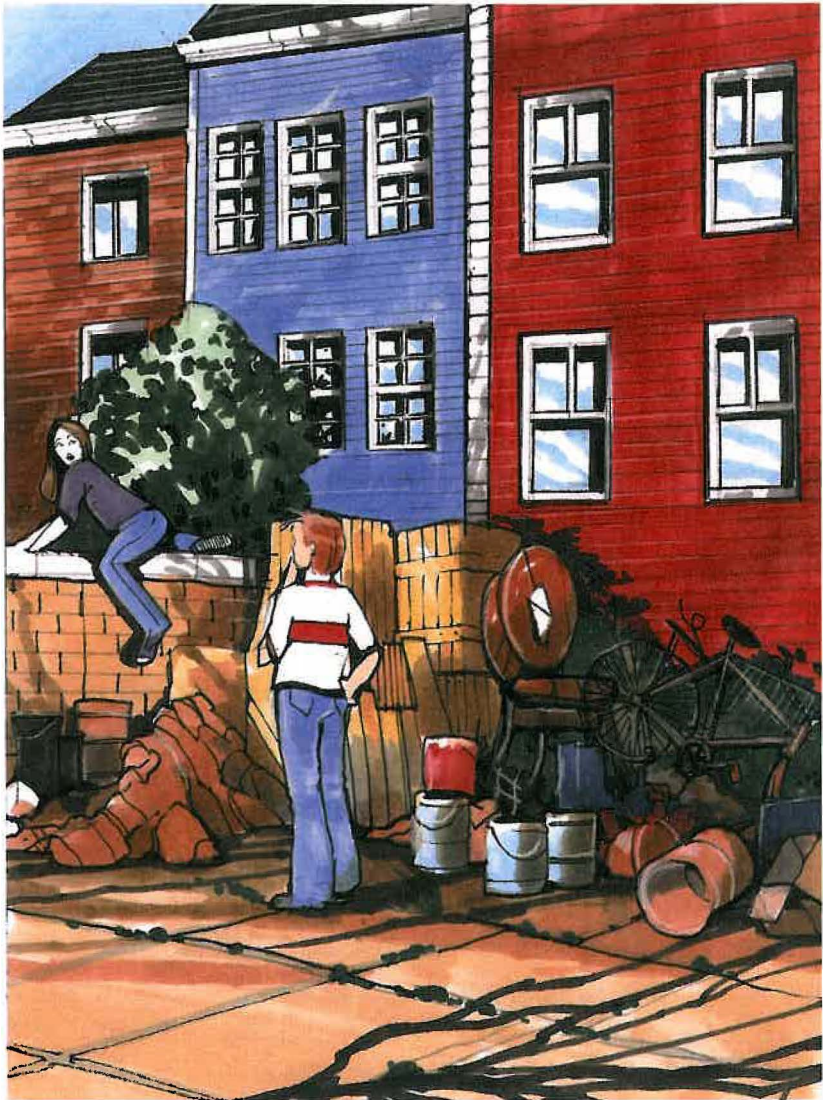
A woman went past on a bicycle, then the street was empty again.

‘Look,’ said Mary. ‘We’re going in.’

‘But how?’

‘Through the house next door maybe,’ said Mary. She looked quickly up and down the street and then, for the second time, pulled him quickly through the half-open front door. ‘See – there aren’t any builders here today, so let’s try the back of the house.’

They walked through the house to the back. There was a door there that opened onto a very small garden. They went out. Between them and the house next door was a wall, but it wasn't very high.



‘Come on,’ said Mary and pulled herself up. Andy started to say something, but Mary stopped him.

‘Come on,’ she said again. ‘We’ll be in and out in five minutes. Nobody will know we’ve been there.’

‘All right,’ said Andy unhappily and he pulled himself up and over the wall too.

There was a window on the ground floor. Mary and Andy looked through it into a small kitchen. Then Mary looked at the window itself more carefully.

‘I don’t think this window’s locked,’ she said. She felt in her pockets but couldn’t find what she wanted. ‘Wait here,’ she said to Andy. Then she climbed back over the wall.

A minute later she was back with one of the builders’ knives in her hand. She pushed the knife down the side of the window. It opened easily. She and Andy climbed into the kitchen. There was a table, chairs, two dirty coffee cups, but no painting. They stood and listened for a minute.

‘OK,’ said Mary. ‘I can’t hear anyone. Let’s have a quick look round.’

They went from the kitchen into a large living room at the front of the house: no painting there, just two sofas, chairs, a coffee table and a TV. There were also some stairs going up. Mary started walking up the stairs. Andy followed. On the first floor there were three rooms: a small bathroom and two bedrooms. Andy looked in the bathroom; Mary pushed open the door to one of the bedrooms. It was a large room with two double beds and a large wardrobe. There was also a sofa, two large chairs and a bookcase full of old books. She looked behind the sofa and under the beds – no painting.

As she turned to leave the room, she looked at the bookcase. On one of the shelves was a photograph of a dog in

front of a house in the country. Mary walked over and took the photo off the shelf to look at it more closely. Not for the first time she hoped she could have a dog one day soon. She was about to put the photo back, when she saw something.

‘That’s strange,’ she thought. ‘There’s a keyhole in the back of the bookcase.’



Just then, Andy came into the room.

‘Come on,’ he said. ‘We’ve got to be quick.’ Then he saw what she was doing. ‘What are you looking at?’ he asked.

‘Why is there a keyhole in the back of the bookcase?’ asked Mary.

‘I don’t know,’ he said. ‘Come on ...’ But then he stopped.

Mary was pulling the bookcase and it was opening like a door. Andy and Mary looked behind it into a small area like a cupboard. In the cupboard was the ‘thing’ that they were looking for. Quickly Mary pulled away the cloth.



‘Look,’ she said. ‘The painting! I *knew* we were right.’

Just then there was a noise from downstairs. Andy and Mary stopped and looked at each other. It was the front door – a key in the lock.

Quickly, Mary put the cloth back over the painting. Then she closed the bookcase carefully and put the photograph back in front of the keyhole.

‘We haven’t seen it,’ she said quietly to Andy. ‘Now let’s try to get out of here.’

They listened at the half-open bedroom door.

There were noises and talking and they heard someone starting to climb the stairs. A voice called from below.

'Someone's been in here,' said a voice. It sounded like Os, the shorter man.

'What do you mean?' It was Jake's voice.

'I mean the kitchen window's open. Someone's been in here.'

Jake, on the stairs, started to run up. Andy and Mary moved back into the room.

Jake ran into the room and saw the teenagers. He looked at the bookcase, then looked back at them.



‘Os,’ he shouted. ‘In the bedroom.’

Mary started to move to her left. Jake moved to stop her, but Mary was too fast. She moved quickly to the right, got past him and ran for the door. But it was too late. Os was there in front of her. She ran into him. He put his hand on her shoulders and pushed her back into the room.

‘Not so fast, young lady,’ he said. ‘You’re going nowhere.’

The room at the top of the house

‘Let us go!’ shouted Mary.

Jake pushed her onto the sofa.

‘Sit there and be quiet!’ he said. Then he looked at Andy.

‘You too! On the sofa.’

Andy moved across the room and sat down next to Mary. Jake watched them both, an unfriendly look on his face.

‘What are you two doing here?’ he asked.

‘Nothing,’ said Mary. ‘Well, nothing wrong. The kitchen window was open, so we came in for a look round. We didn’t take anything.’

Jake looked at Os.

‘The window’s never open,’ said Os. ‘We need to ask the boss¹⁰ what to do with them.’

‘Yes,’ agreed Jake. ‘We’re on our way to see him anyway, so let’s leave these two here for a few hours to think about how stupid they’ve been.’

He looked at Mary and Andy.

‘Right,’ said Os. ‘Upstairs.’

‘Come on,’ said Jake. ‘Move.’

Andy and Mary stood up. Andy put a hand in his pocket and felt his phone. ‘We’re going to be OK,’ he thought. ‘If they lock us up, I can just call Mum and tell her where we are.’

But his hopes ended quickly.

‘Have you two got phones?’ asked Os. ‘Give them here!’

Mary and Andy passed their phones to Os. He threw them on the bed.

‘Upstairs!’ said Jake.

Mary and Andy started walking up the stairs, Jake and Os behind them.

‘Your English is funny,’ said Andy.

Jake laughed.

‘It’s *your* English that’s funny,’ he said. ‘Where are you from? Britain?’

‘Yes,’ said Andy. ‘And where are *you* from?’

‘None of your business,¹¹’ said Os.

* * *

The house was very tall. ‘Upstairs’ was three floors up: a small bedroom on the fourth floor at the front of the house. There was a small bed, a chair and table, and a lamp. Out of the window you could see the canal a long way below.

‘In here,’ said Jake. He walked over and tried the window. It didn’t open.

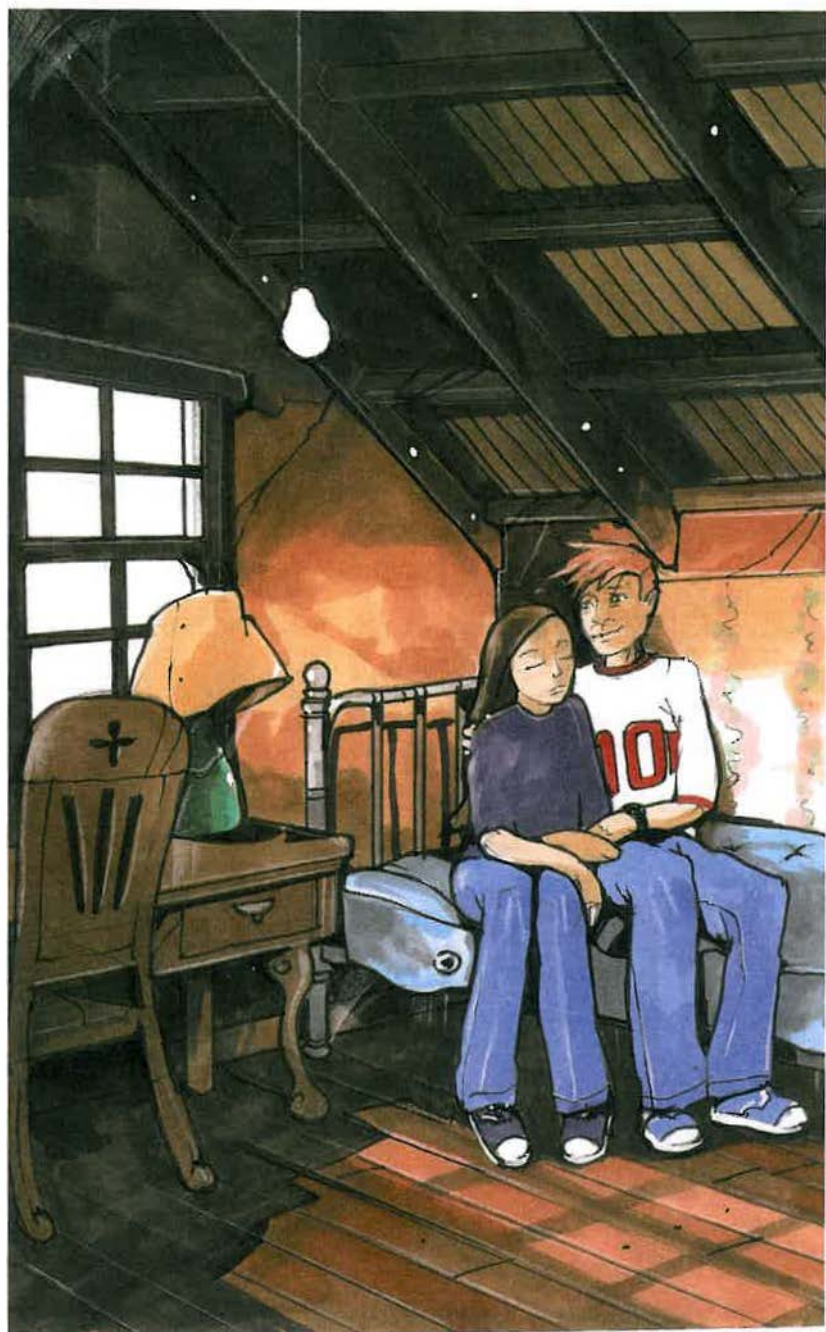
‘Don’t try to escape,’ he said. ‘You can’t.’

He shut the door and they heard the key in the lock.

Andy turned to Mary. He was about to say something but didn’t. She looked like she wanted to cry. She could be like that: fine until they really got into trouble, and then she just fell to pieces and started crying. That’s when he had to help her.

‘I’m sorry,’ said Mary. ‘It was a mistake coming in here. My mistake. I’m sorry. We’re in trouble, aren’t we? What are we going to do, Andy?’

Andy put his arm around Mary’s shoulders.



‘Well, as usual, you’ve got us both into trouble and I’ll have to get us out,’ he said.

She looked at him. His voice was kind. She thought he would be angry, but he wasn’t.

‘The most important thing is to get out of this room before those men come back,’ Andy said. ‘First let’s have a look at the window.’

Andy walked over and looked at it very carefully. He tried it, but it really didn’t open. He looked at the glass and then looked down at the street below.

‘We could break the glass and then shout for help,’ he said. ‘But this street isn’t very busy and I don’t think that anyone will hear us.’

Mary was still sitting on the bed, looking unhappy. Andy walked across the room and started looking at the door. He looked all round it and then he looked at the lock. Mary watched him.

‘They’ve left the key in the lock on the other side, you know,’ said Andy. ‘Maybe we can push it out onto the floor and pull it through this side. I read something like that in a book once.’

He started to take off his T-shirt.

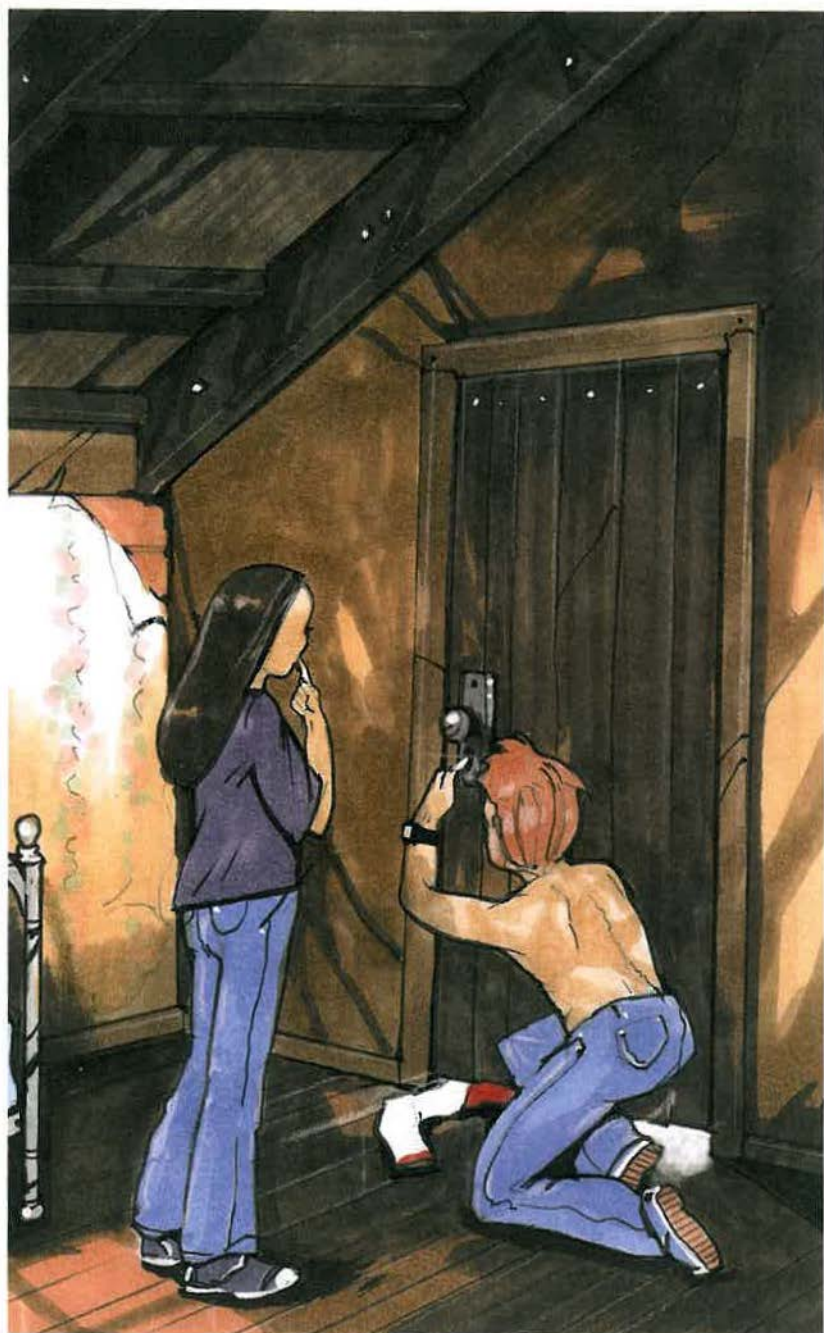
‘I’ll try to get this under the door to catch the key when it falls out,’ he said to Mary. ‘See if you can find something to push the key out with.’

Mary started looking round the room. Andy got down and began pushing his T-shirt under the door.

‘What about this?’ asked Mary. In her hand was a pen. ‘It was under the bed.’

Andy looked at the lock and tried to push the pen into it.

‘It’s too big,’ he said. He started to give it back to Mary,



but then he had another idea. Quickly, he took the pen to pieces. The inside of the pen was much smaller.

‘That’s better,’ he said.

On his knees by the door, he pushed the inside of the pen into the lock.

Carefully and slowly, he pushed at the key. After a couple of minutes there was a soft noise, as the key fell out of the lock onto Andy’s T-shirt.

‘All we have to do now is get it under the door,’ he said.

Andy got down on his hands and knees so he could see under the door. Little by little he pulled his T-shirt through from the other side. He had to keep the key on the T-shirt! Mary watched, her lip between her teeth.

For one terrible moment Andy thought the key was too big to get under the door, but then it came through. Quickly, he put it in the lock and opened the door. Mary put her arms round him and gave him a kiss on the cheek.

‘Thank you,’ she said. ‘You’re wonderful!’

‘Yeah, yeah!’ said Andy and pushed her away. ‘Come on. Let’s get out of here.’

They ran down the stairs, Andy pulling on his T-shirt on the way. At the bottom of the stairs Andy stopped.

‘Wait a minute,’ he said. He ran back to the first-floor bedroom and came back down with their phones.

‘They were still on the bed,’ he said.

He gave Mary hers and put his in his pocket.

‘Shall we go out through the front door?’ he asked.

‘Yes,’ said Mary. ‘And let’s find that police inspector again.’



LOOKING BACK

- 1 Check your answers to *Looking forward* on page 27.

ACTIVITIES

- 2 Put the sentences in order.

- 1 Jake and Os come into the house.
- 2 Mary and Andy run down the stairs.
- 3 Andy and Mary go back to the Lijnbaansgracht.
- 4 Os takes Andy and Mary's mobile phones.
- 5 Mary finds a pen.
- 6 Andy and Mary climb over the wall.
- 7 Mary pulls Andy into the first house.
- 8 Mary finds the painting.
- 9 Andy and Mary leave the house.

- 3 Underline the correct words in each sentence.

- 1 Ellen thinks Andy and Mary are *visiting museums / watching a film* today.
- 2 Andy and Mary enter the house using a *key / knife*.
- 3 *Jake / Os* sees the teenagers first.
- 4 *Jake / Os* catches Mary at the end of Chapter 4.
- 5 Os *says / doesn't say* where he is from.
- 6 Andy *is / isn't* angry with Mary.
- 7 *Mary / Andy* opens the door using a pen.
- 8 When the teenagers escape, they want to talk to *Kompier / a policeman*.

4 Match the two parts of the sentences.

- 1 Mary takes a knife because c
 - 2 Mary looks under the beds but
 - 3 The bookcase is strange because
 - 4 Mary says sorry to Andy because
 - 5 Andy tries to push the pen into the lock but
- a she's got them into trouble.
 - b the painting isn't there.
 - ~~c~~ she wants to open a window.
 - d there's a keyhole in the back of it.
 - e it isn't small enough.

5 Answer the questions.

1 Where is Ellen at the start of Chapter 4?

.....

2 Where does Mary find the painting?

.....

3 Where do the robbers take Mary and Andy?

.....

4 What does Andy use to catch the key?

.....

LOOKING FORWARD



6 Tick (✓) what you think happens in the next two chapters.

- 1 Jake and Os find Andy and Mary again.
- 2 Peter helps the teenagers to catch the robbers.
- 3 Ellen is very angry with her children.

Kompier doesn't want to know



Half an hour later Mary and Andy were back at the police station on Beursstraat. They were arguing with the police officer at the front desk.

‘We need to see Inspector Kompier,’ said Mary.

‘You’ve seen her once already today, haven’t you?’ asked the officer.

‘Yes,’ replied Andy, ‘but we have some important new information. We need to see her again.’

‘Well,’ said the officer, looking up at a clock on the wall and then back at Mary and Andy, ‘she’s a busy woman. I don’t think she’ll want to see you again.’

‘But you don’t understand—’ began Mary.

‘Oh! I think I do,’ said the officer. ‘Two cars, a boat and seven or eight officers driving round Amsterdam looking for a painting that wasn’t there.’ He put both his elbows on the desk and rested his chin on his hands. ‘Believe me,’ he said. ‘She doesn’t want to see you again today.’

Andy and Mary looked at each other. What could they do? To their right was the door that went through to the police offices. Perhaps they could just go through and try to find her. But there was a lock on the door. And you needed to know the correct number to put into the lock before you could open the door.

‘Why don’t you two just enjoy your holiday in Amsterdam?’ said the officer. ‘Leave the detective work to us – OK?’

Just then the door to the offices opened and Inspector Kompier walked out.

‘Inspector! Inspector!’ Andy and Mary ran towards her. Kompier held up a hand to stop them.

‘Wait,’ she said. ‘Just a minute. Slow down.’

Andy and Mary stopped in front of her.

‘Now,’ said the inspector. ‘What are you doing back here?’

Quickly, Mary started to tell her about going back to the house on the Lijnbaansgracht, about finding the painting, and about Jake and Os. Kompier listened, but it was difficult to know from her face if she was interested or not.

The desk officer listened and watched, but halfway through the story he had to answer his phone. He spoke into it for a minute or two and then called over to Kompier.

‘Inspector, I think you should talk to this person.’

Kompier went to the desk and took the phone.

‘Yes?’

She listened for a while and then spoke. She spoke mainly Dutch, but she used a few English words too. Mary heard a lot of Dutch people speaking like this. Sometimes they used a French word or two as well.

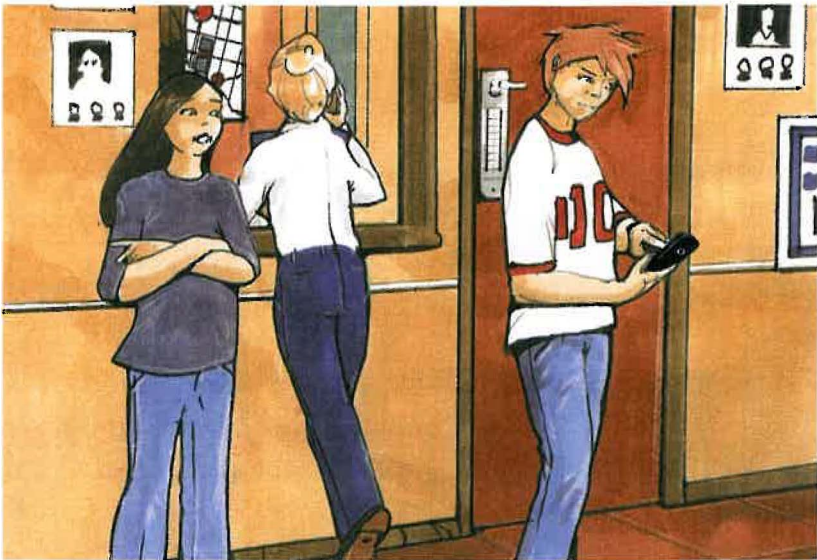
The conversation continued.

Mary and Andy looked at each other.

‘I don’t think she believes us,’ said Mary.

‘No,’ agreed Andy.

Finally Kompier said something in Dutch, then back in English she said, ‘Look! I have to go. Call me on my mobile. It’s 06-3576-3957. Got that? 06-3576-3957.’



She put the phone down and started talking to the desk officer. Out of the corner of her eye, Mary saw Andy take his phone out of his trouser pocket and do something with it. Then he put it away again.

Kompier turned back to the teenagers.

‘Look,’ she said. ‘I’m sorry, but I’m really busy. I don’t have time to listen to your story right now. Just tell Officer Kuipers here everything and he can tell me when I get back.’

She looked at Kuipers.

‘Write down their story and put it on my desk,’ she said. But the look in her eyes said, ‘We’ve all got better things to do than listen to these two.’

Kompier walked quickly out of the front door. The desk officer turned round to take a piece of paper from the shelf behind him, but when he turned back Andy and Mary were no longer there. He smiled to himself and put the paper back.

Out on the street Andy was angry.

‘It’s so stupid,’ he said. ‘We know who the robbers are. We go to tell the police. And they don’t want to listen. How stupid is that?’

Mary put a hand on his arm.

‘Come on, Andy,’ she said. ‘Let’s go and find Mum. She’ll listen to us and she’ll know what to do.’

‘Do we know where she is?’ asked Andy.

‘Yes,’ said Mary. ‘She said she was at Peter van Noordwyk’s office today. It’s on the Keizergracht. Can we find that?’

‘Yes,’ said Andy. ‘It’s on the way back to the hotel. Come on. Let’s go.’

Meeting Peter van Noordwyk again



Peter van Noordwyk ran his business from the top three floors of a tall building on the corner of the Keizergracht and Leidsestraat. Mary and Andy arrived there soon after four o'clock. They went through some tall double doors on the ground floor and found themselves in a large open area. There were two lifts to take people to the other floors and, on the wall, the names of all the businesses in the building.

Andy looked at the names.

'There,' he said. 'Van Noordwyk International. Floors ten to twelve. Which floor is Mum going to be on?'

'No idea,' replied Mary. 'Let's try the top one.'

'OK.'

Andy called the lift and they stood between the doors, waiting for one of them to open.

They heard the noise of a lift coming down, then the doors on the left opened. Out of the lift came Jake and Os.

Andy's mouth fell open. Mary put out a hand to pull Andy away so they could run and escape from the men – but she wasn't quick enough. Os took Andy's arm and pushed it up behind his back; Jake took Mary's arm in his large hand. Mary pushed and pulled at Jake's hand, but she could not get away.

'How did you get out of that room? What are you doing here?' asked Jake.

'Let me go,' said Mary, trying to fight with him.

'Let's take them upstairs quick,' said Os to Jake, 'before someone sees us.'

'Right,' said Jake.

The lift doors were still open, so the men pushed Mary and Andy into the lift.

'We were just coming to get you,' said Os. 'But now the boss will meet you sooner than he thinks.'

‘Good,’ said Mary. ‘Because we haven’t taken anything and we haven’t done anything wrong – so you won’t need to keep us.’

‘If they think we know nothing,’ Mary thought to herself, ‘we can probably get out of this. But if they think we know about the painting, we’ve got a big problem.’

She looked at Andy and hoped that he understood this. But Andy was just looking at the lift doors, hands in his pockets, his eyes half closed in thought.

As the lift stopped at the twelfth floor, Mary thought of something.

‘Who is your boss?’ she asked.

‘Wait and see,’ said Jake. Mary looked across at Andy. She could see that he had also put two and two together.¹²

Jake and Os pushed Andy and Mary out of the lift and to the right, stopping in front of a large door. Jake opened the door and pushed the teenagers into the room.

‘Sorry to come in like this, sir,’ said Jake, ‘but we found these two downstairs. They were on the ground floor waiting for the lift.’

Mary and Andy looked round the room. It was a large office. There were windows on two sides, looking out over the rooftops of Amsterdam and down on the tall thin houses across the canal. There was a large desk in the middle of the room with papers on it. And behind the desk sat ... Peter van Noordwyk!

‘Ah!’ said the man behind the desk, putting down a pen and sitting back. ‘Andy and Mary. I thought it was probably you two when Jake described the two teenagers to me.’ He looked at Andy. ‘There can’t be many tall red-haired English boys running round Amsterdam.’

Mary looked round at the door, but Jake and Os were standing in front of it. She looked back at the man behind the desk. She had to make him think they knew nothing.

‘Well, you can just let us go,’ she said, ‘because we haven’t done anything wrong.’

Van Noordwyk laughed.



Just then Andy took his hands out of his pockets and spoke to Van Noordwyk.

‘Mr Van Noordwyk,’ he said. ‘Or Peter, as you asked us to call you last night ...’

Van Noordwyk turned to Andy with a questioning look.

‘I just don’t understand it,’ said Andy. ‘I mean, you’re a rich man. You’ve got a new house, nice offices here on the Keizergracht. Why do you want to—?’

‘Andy ...’ said Mary quickly. He mustn’t tell Van Noordwyk about the painting.

‘Shh! Mary,’ said Andy, but he was still looking at Van Noordwyk. ‘Leave this to me!’

‘What are you talking about?’ asked Van Noordwyk, an unfriendly smile on his face.

‘We’ve already been to the police,’ said Andy. ‘They know everything: about the painting from the Rijksmuseum, the house on the Lijnbaansgracht, you, everything.’

Van Noordwyk smiled again, but his eyes were cold.

‘I think not,’ he said. ‘I had a conversation with your mother when she arrived after lunch today. The police went to the house on the Lijnbaansgracht and found nothing. If they go back there, they will still find nothing, because the painting is here now. They know nothing about me because you didn’t find out who I was, until you were stupid enough to come here.’

He sat back in his chair.

‘At the moment,’ he said, ‘none of the information you have given them has been of any help at all. But some time – next week, next month maybe – they could decide to believe you and that could be a problem for me.’

He looked round the room at everyone, thinking. Then he stood up.

'Right, you wanted to go out in my boat at the weekend. Well, I think we can do better than that. We'll go out in it today.'

He turned to Os.

'Os, bring the car to the front of the building.' He looked at Jake. 'Get Mrs Lawson,' he said. 'She's in the library. Tell her that her children are here and want to talk to her. Then we'll go out to sea for a short time.'

Jake and Os laughed and Mary's back went cold. Van Noordwyk was worried about what they knew. He couldn't allow them to talk to the police. But what did he mean? Why was he taking them out to sea? Did that really mean what she thought? But he couldn't ... he couldn't do that, could he?



LOOKING BACK

- 1 Check your answer to *Looking forward* on page 43.

ACTIVITIES

- 2 Are the sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- 1 Mary tells Kompier about the painting. T
- 2 Kompier gives Andy her phone number.
- 3 Mary knows where the Keizergracht is.
- 4 Andy and Mary decide to go to the twelfth floor.
- 5 Jake and Os find the teenagers on the twelfth floor.
- 6 Peter says that the police don't know about him.
- 7 The painting is still in the house.
- 8 Jake is going to bring Ellen into Peter's office.

- 3 Match the two parts of the sentences.

- 1 06-3576-3957 is c
 - 2 The Keizergracht is
 - 3 Jake and Os find
 - 4 Mary doesn't want to
 - 5 Peter is going to
- a the street where Peter works.
 - b Andy and Mary in the building.
 - ~~c~~ Kompier's phone number.
 - d take the teenagers out to sea.
 - e tell Peter about the painting.

4 Complete the sentences with the names in the box.

Andy Kompier Ellen Mary Peter (x2)

- 1 Andy and Mary want Kompier to listen to their story.
- 2 uses his mobile phone in the police station.
- 3 works at the top of a tall building.
- 4 tries to fight with Jake.
- 5 Jake and Os work for
- 6 is in the library.

5 Answer the questions.

- 1 What languages does Kompier speak on the phone?
.....
- 2 What does Kompier tell Kuipers to do?
.....
- 3 What time do Andy and Mary arrive at Peter's office?
.....
- 4 Describe Peter's office.
.....

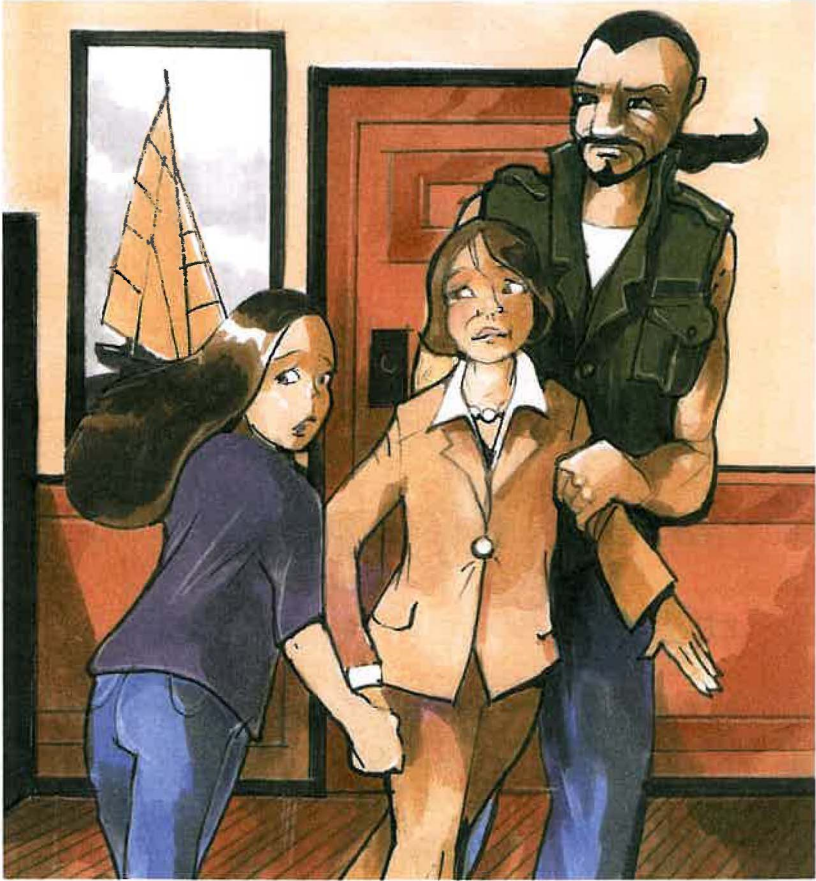
LOOKING FORWARD



6 What do you think? Answer the questions.

- 1 Who cries in the next chapter?
.....
- 2 Who has a gun?
.....

Catching the robbers



A few minutes later Jake came back with Ellen Lawson.

‘Mary! Andy!’ she said. ‘What are you doing here?’

‘Mum!’ cried Mary, running across the room to her mother and taking her by the hand. Andy stayed across the room, watching.

Ellen looked at Van Noordwyk.

'Peter, what's happening?' she asked.

Van Noordwyk was standing in front of the window.

'Well, we have a problem, Mrs Lawson,' he said. 'Your children know things – things that are dangerous for them to know.'

'What things?' asked Ellen.

'Mum! Mum!' said Mary. 'Peter stole the painting. Well, that man Jake and another man stole it for him. And it *was* hidden in that house. We saw it. Andy and I saw it.'

Ellen looked at Andy.

'It's true, Mum,' he said. Ellen looked at her children. Mary was clearly¹³ afraid and now had her arms round her, but Andy didn't look afraid at all. What was happening? She turned to Van Noordwyk.

'Well?' she asked.

'Well, it's true,' he said. 'That's the problem.'

For a moment no one spoke. Ellen Lawson thought quickly.

'We don't have to go to the police again,' said Ellen.

'A nice idea,' replied Van Noordwyk. 'But it's not going to work.'

He looked at Jake. Jake now had a gun in his hand.

'I've already decided what we're going to do,' said Van Noordwyk.

'Mum! Mum!' cried Mary. 'He's going to take us out to sea in his boat. What does he mean? What are they going to do?'

Ellen Lawson's face went white.

'Let's go,' said Van Noordwyk. 'And don't make this difficult. Don't start shouting. There's no one on this floor'

to hear you. Don't try to escape. Jake and I will be with you, and Os will be waiting at the bottom when you get out of the lift. Don't do anything stupid.'

Jake opened the office door and waved his gun at the Lawsons. Andy came across the room. He took his mother's hand.

'Don't worry, Mum,' he said. 'It'll be all right.' Ellen Lawson looked at her son. Why wasn't he afraid?

On the way down in the lift, Mary started to cry quietly. Andy put his hand on her arm. Then he looked Van Noordwyk right in the eye and smiled. A moment of worry passed across Van Noordwyk's face, but then the lift reached the ground floor and stopped.

The doors opened. There was the sound of police officers taking out their guns. Then Kompier shouted, 'Put down your guns and put your hands in the air.'

Van Noordwyk was fast. His left arm went round Ellen Lawson's neck, his right hand put his gun to her head. Jake moved behind Andy, his arm across the front of Andy's body and his gun pushed into Andy's back.

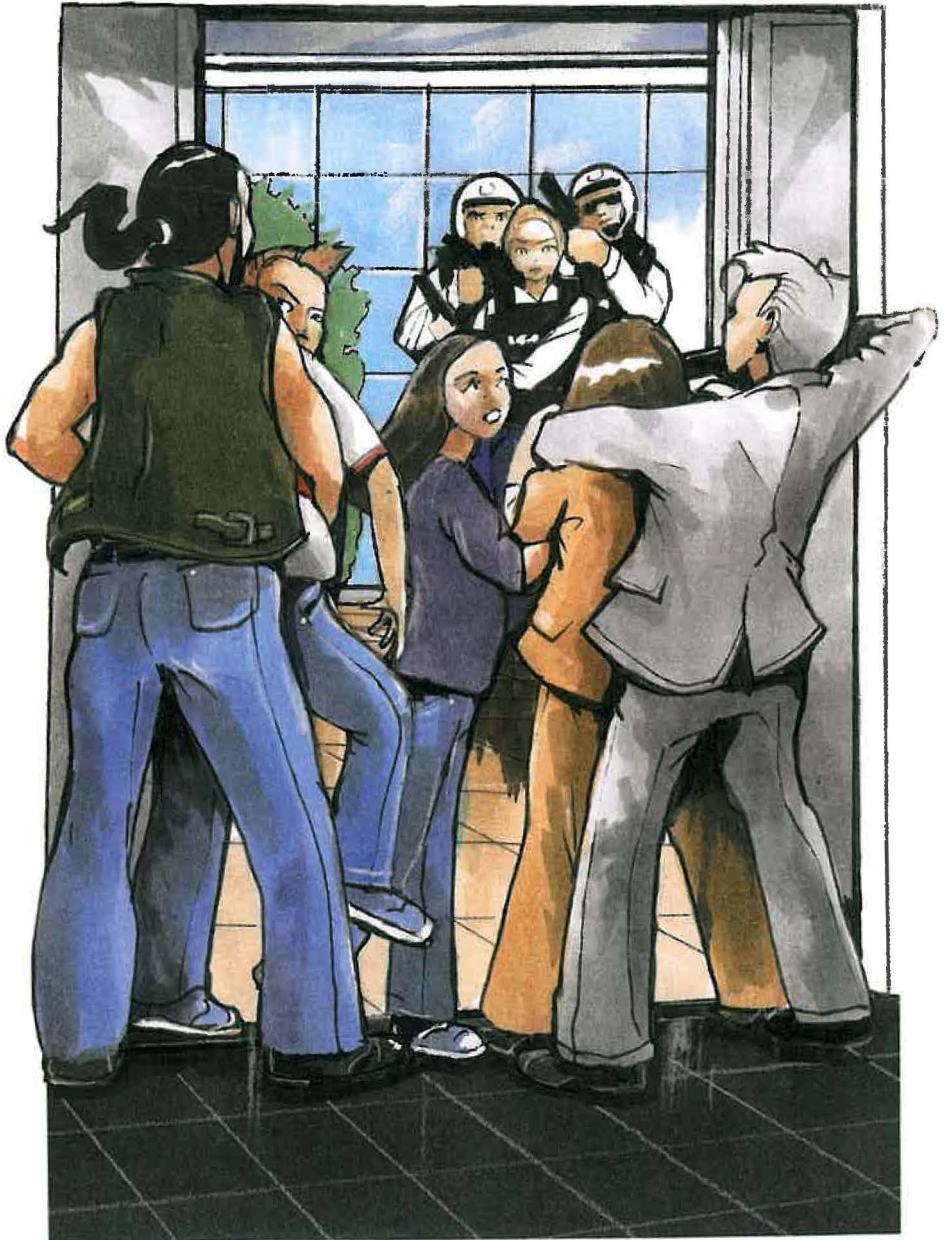
'Shut the doors!' said Van Noordwyk to Jake.

'You can't,' said Kompier. 'The engineer has stopped the lift working. Put down your guns. You can't get away. We have your driver and your car. And I have men on their way up to your offices to find the painting.'

Van Noordwyk looked at Jake and then back at Kompier.

'Don't make things worse than they are,' said Kompier. 'Killing people is much worse than stealing a painting.'

Van Noordwyk looked back at Jake. His shoulders went down.



'OK,' he said. He took his arm away from Ellen Lawson's neck and threw his gun on the floor. Jake did the same. Two police officers with guns moved slowly, watching Jake and Van Noordwyk carefully. They made the two men turn and put their hands against the wall while they checked their pockets.

Van Noordwyk turned his head to look up at Kompier.

'How did you know?' he asked.

Kompier looked at Andy. Andy took his phone out of his pocket and waved it at Van Noordwyk.

'The inspector was listening to all of our conversation,' said Andy. 'My phone was in my pocket. I called her while Jake and Os were bringing us up in the lift.'

'Then he very cleverly told me who you were and where your offices were,' said Kompier. 'But what I don't know is how he knew my mobile phone number.'

'When we were at the police station this afternoon, you gave it to someone over the phone,' replied Andy. 'I put it into my phone then. I just thought, "Perhaps I'll need it".'

The police officers finished checking Jake and Van Noordwyk and pulled them to their feet.

Kompier looked at them, then at the officers.

'OK,' she said. 'Take these two and the other one down to Beursstraat and lock them up. I'll come to speak to them later.'

She turned back to the Lawsons. Mary was holding onto her mother again, but looking happier now.

'I don't know which is best, Mrs Lawson,' said Kompier. 'To thank your children because they helped us catch three robbers; or to be angry with them because they put themselves, and you, in such great danger.'

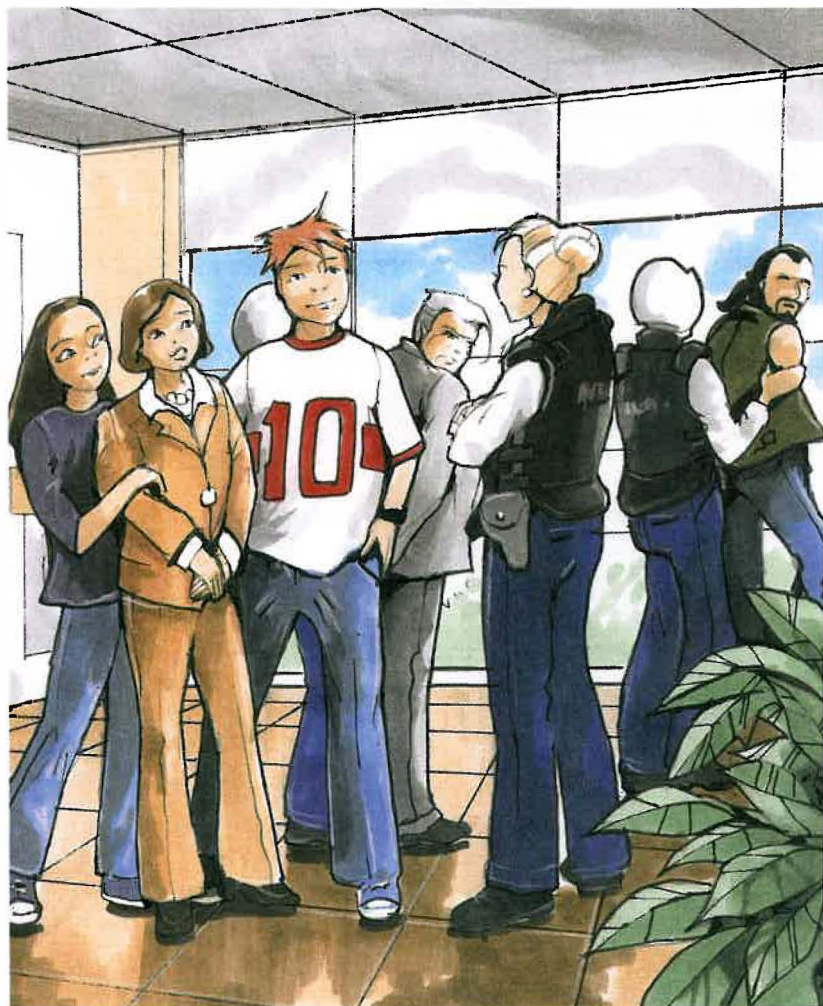
'Oh! You have to thank us,' said Mary. 'Because Mum's not going to.'

'No, I don't think she is,' said Kompier.

'Not because of the danger ...' said Mary.

'No?' asked Kompier.

'No,' said Andy. 'Because of us, she doesn't have a job any more!'



LOOKING BACK

- 1 Check your answers to *Looking forward* on page 55.

ACTIVITIES

- 2 Put the sentences in order.

- 1 Ellen says that they don't need to go to the police.
- 2 Ellen sees Andy and Mary in Peter's office.
- 3 Ellen hears that Peter is going to take them in his boat.
- 4 Mary says that Jake and Os left the painting in the house on Lijnbaansgracht.
- 5 They take the lift down to the ground floor and, when the doors open, the police are waiting for them.
- 6 Kompier tells Peter that Andy used his mobile phone to give her information about him.
- 7 Peter and Jake put down their guns.

- 3 Underline the correct words in each sentence.

- 1 Andy is / isn't afraid.
- 2 Jake / Os is going to wait for the family on the ground floor.
- 3 Peter puts his gun to Ellen's / Mary's head.
- 4 The police haven't / have caught Peter's driver.
- 5 Andy put Kompier's phone number into his phone at the hotel / police station.
- 6 Mary thinks that Ellen will / won't thank her and Andy.

4 Are the sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- 1 Mary runs to be with her mother.
- 2 There are other people working on the twelfth floor.
- 3 Andy smiles at Jake in the lift.
- 4 Peter and Jake are carrying guns in the lift.
- 5 Jake can't close the lift doors after they arrive on the ground floor.
- 6 Kompier says that stealing a painting is worse than killing someone.
- 7 Peter can't understand how the police know about everything.
- 8 Ellen hasn't got a job at the end of the story.

5 Answer the questions.

1 Who brings Ellen to Peter's office?

.....

2 Who has stopped the lift working?

.....

3 Who has taken Peter's car?

.....

4 When did Andy call Kompier?

.....

5 Where are the police going to take the robbers?

.....

6 Why does Mary say that Kompier has to thank her and Andy?

.....

Glossary



- ¹**trouble** (page 5) *noun* If you are in trouble, you have problems, usually because you have done something wrong
- ²**narrow** (page 7) *adjective* a short way from one side to the other; not **wide**
- ³**wide** (page 8) *adjective* a long way from one side to the other; not **narrow**
- ⁴**cloth** (page 9) *noun* material that you use, for example, to make clothes
- ⁵**twin** (page 10) *noun* a person who has a brother or sister who was born at the same time
- ⁶**deep** (page 12) *adjective* a long way from top to bottom; (here) used to describe a voice that is like an adult's
- ⁷**suit** (page 12) *noun* a jacket and trousers (or jacket and skirt) that are made from the same material
- ⁸**on our own** (page 14) *expression* alone, without any other people
- ⁹**tell the truth** (page 19) *expression* to say something that is true
- ¹⁰**boss** (page 35) *noun* the person who tells other people what to do at work
- ¹¹**none of your business** (page 36) *expression* used to tell someone that something is private and they must not ask you about it
- ¹²**put two and two together** (page 50) *expression* to guess that something is true from what you have seen or heard
- ¹³**clearly** (page 57) *adverb* in a way that is easy to see