

# Hattie Frail

Missing

Copyright © May 2021 revised February 2026  
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2nd Edition

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## Synopsis

A very famous local lady painter 54-year-old Mrs Danielle McManus goes missing, then on the same day one of her precious paintings gets stolen from her art studio – and there's a possibility that her house gets broken into as well. Detective Inspector Dorking and Hattie Frail are on the case.

## Scene 1

It's 10 p.m. on Saturday 5th June 2032 and it's a hot, dry, sticky evening. At number 25, Cox Street, Appletown. A 24-year-old Mr Chris McManus has just arrived home from his expensive week holiday in Monte Carlo.

MR C MCMANUS

(enter right, puts down his luggage and shouts)  
Mum, I'm home! I'm here, Mum! Where were you? I couldn't get hold of you, so I had to brave a taxi instead!

MISS E MCMANUS

(enter left, 22-year-old Miss Elle McManus with her arms stretched out and is concerned)  
Hello, Chris. How come you're not with mum? She left here about an hour ago.

MR C MCMANUS

Ah hello, sis, this is a nice surprise. I didn't expect to see you here; I thought you'd be somewhere nice with Jason for the weekend. And I'm sorry, but I've absolutely no idea where she is. I tried phoning her when I was on the train, but I couldn't get any answer. Anyway, why on earth would she leave an hour ago? It's only just down the road.

MISS E MCMANUS

Well, she said she had to go to her art studio to do something there first.

(touches her shoulder-length auburn hair)

Where on earth could she be? I hope nothing bad has happened to her.

MR C MCMANUS

(touches his black stubbly chin)

Maybe she's been held up at a petrol station or something. Look, why don't we wait for a bit before we go searching for her, starting with the art studio first – say at about in about an hours' time?

MISS E MCMANUS

(sighs)

Yes, I suppose we could do that. Why don't you put your suitcases up in your bedroom and I'll make you something light to eat in the meantime.

MR C MCMANUS

Yes, good idea!

Scene 2

It's the following day at 9.02 a.m. and it's raining hard. In the Appletown Police Station newly promoted DI George Dorking is sitting down at his desk drinking his usual mug of hot black coffee.

(a knock is heard on the door)

DI G DORKING

Come in! Yes, Leroy?

PC L RUSSELL

(enter left)

Excuse me, but before I tell you about my phone call, do I hear there are any congratulations in order then ... Sir?

DI G DORKING

Thank you, Leroy, yes, I won the weekend's local golf tournament, no less, and maybe a get-together in the pub could be arranged later on to celebrate. So, what's this enquiry all about then?

PC L RUSSELL

Yes, Sir, good idea. Well, we have a very distressed Mr Chris McManus at the front desk. He's saying his step mum, Mrs Danielle McManus, has gone missing. She was supposed to meet him at the Appletown train station at 10 p.m. yesterday. Apparently, they couldn't get hold of her on her Smartwatch; so, at about 11 p.m. last night they

both went out in Elle's car to search for her, and they've only just stopped looking. Elle will be here in a minute; she's just parking the car.

DI G DORKING

(stands up)

Oh no! I know that family very well. Chris is a sports shop manager, and Elle is an excellent violinist. So, Danielle's gone missing; this is very unusual behaviour indeed. Right, I'd you to take on this case, starting with filling in the missing person's form.

PC L RUSSELL

Will do, sir.

(exit right)

(back at the front desk area, enter right siblings Miss Elle McManus and Mr Chris McManus).

PC L RUSSELL

(leans forward with a missing person's form in hand)  
I'm PC Russell, and Detective Inspector Dorking has given me the job of filling in the missing persons form, so let's start from the beginning, shall we?

MISS E MCMANUS

Well yes, hello, PC Russell. It was about 9 p.m. last night that Mum left in her car; firstly, she had to do something in her art studio and then had to go and pick up Chris from the train station. But she never turned up. Something bad must've happened to her, I just know it.

MR C MCMANUS

Yes, we've been looking all over town. We first went to her art studio, but she wasn't there. We even went back to our house before we came here.

PC L RUSSELL

OK. What's the make of the car, the colour and the

registration?

MISS E MCMANUS

It's an old, hybrid blue Ford Fiesta, about twenty years old. The registration has the letter o and the number six in it, that's all I can tell you, I'm sorry.

PC L RUSSELL

OK, thanks. Now, is there any reason you can think of for her disappearance? Like for instance, has she been under a lot of stress lately? Anyone who would want to do her any harm? Anything?

MISS E MCMANUS

Well, our dad married Danielle about six years ago, and for the past year or so things haven't been too that good. They've been having a few arguments; we don't have any idea what they've been about.

PC L RUSSELL

(sighs and leans back on his chair)

So where is your dad? I'll need to talk to him.

MISS E MCMANUS

Dad's not here: he's coming home from an important business meeting in Wales. Therefore, we haven't told him anything about this yet. We didn't want him to worry in case he had a car crash in the process, or something like that.

PC L RUSSELL

Well, I'm sorry, but I do need to talk to him straight away. Can I have his contact details, please?

MISS E MCMANUS

It's OK, I'll phone him right now.

(dials on her Smartwatch)

Oh, I thought so, he's got it on voicemail. Dad, it's Elle, sorry to have to tell you this, but Mum's been missing since last night. We're all very worried. We're here with a

police officer. Can you ring us as soon as you get this message? Thanks, bye.

PC L RUSSELL

Just to recap here, so she was last seen at her art studio.

MISS E MCMANUS

Yes, that's correct.

PC L RUSSELL

So, what's the address? And I'll need to write down her address as well.

MR C MCMANUS

Yes, of course. The address of the art studio is a room within the art gallery, which is 23, Brambley Street; and she lives at number 25 Cox Street. I'm living with her, but it's only temporary until I can afford to buy my own place.

PC L RUSSELL

Yes, of course. Now is there anything else, other than these arguments, that could be useful to us? Any information at all, no matter how small?

MISS E MCMANUS:

Well, all last week we've all been living on eggshells. It's no wonder she's been a bit touchy lately. You see, early last month she decided to sell off all her artwork to the public. This event was going to happen next Saturday; it was in all the papers and on the Internet, everything. That's all I can think of.

(turns around)

Can you think of anything else, Chris?

MR C MCMANUS

Well, I don't really see her a lot, with me working all the hours God sends. And I've only just got back from my week holiday in Monte Carlo. I went there with a couple of my mates from London.

PC L RUSSELL

Right, you just leave this all to us and we'll be in touch very soon. Do you have any recent photos that we could use in our investigation? Because we now have a local psychic lady officially employed by the police. We may give her access to evidence; she may be present at scenes of crimes and be involved in interviewing witnesses and suspects if needs be. She's called Hattie Frail, and she may be able to help you, if you'd like.

MR C MCMANUS

(sighs)

Well, I don't really believe in psychics.

PC L RUSSELL

This time last year I was saying the exact same thing, but since meeting and working with her I had to change my mind. Believe you me, if we hadn't had her on this other case, we might still be hunting for the person responsible.

MISS E MCMANUS

(looks daggers at Chris)

Well, I do believe in such things, so I will give you my permission to go straight ahead.

(searches in her handbag)

Yes, I've got an old photograph I've always kept it in my purse.

(hands the photo over)

Here it is, although I'd be very upset if it gets lost.

MR C MCMANUS

Oh, go on then, she always gets her own way in the end anyway.

PC L RUSSELL

(takes the photograph)

Yes, of course, I'll look after it personally. That's settled then, I'll contact her in a minute. Don't worry, I promise you we'll do our very best to try and find her. We'll be in

touch as soon as we have any leads. Why don't you just go home and try to get some well-deserved rest, if you can.

MISS E MCMANUS

(yawns)

Yes, that's a good idea, and if we can think of anything in the meantime we'll be in touch.

PC L RUSSELL

Yes, and thank you for coming in. Please let me see you both out.

(all exit right)

### Scene 3

It's 9.38 a.m. PC Leroy Russell is sitting at his desk talking to Miss Hattie Frail on his Smartwatch on FaceTime.

PC L RUSSELL

(leans backwards in his office chair)

So, Hattie, just to recap then. It's about a person who seems to have gone missing. Do you think you could help us with this case?

MISS H FRAIL

Yes, I can do it over the phone if you'd like. So, did anyone leave something behind, like a photograph or anything that I could use right now?

PC L RUSSELL

Oh, that's good! I didn't know you could do this over the phone, oh this is wonderful. Yes, I'm holding up a photograph.

MISS H FRAIL

Right, so let's see. It's a female, and I've got letters d and m. I'm sensing I'm in my car. I've just arrived at my art studio; I'm now carrying a heavy medium-size box and

I'm taking it inside the building. I've put it down onto a rather nice, large, light brown, shiny, wooden table. Moving on, I'm driving down Bagley Road ... hmm ... I'm now getting quite agitated; there's a car tailgating me.

PC L RUSSELL

Yes, it's Danielle McManus.

MISS H FRAIL

Oh, wait a minute ... oh no! ... Danielle McManus! She's that brilliant local artist. I was going to go to her opening gallery do next Saturday. So, this'll be cancelled, for sure. Oh blast, I was really looking forward to that.

PC L RUSSELL

What is she driving?

MISS H FRAIL

Hmm ... yes, it's a big silver car. I can sense the letters m and p... oh no ... my car has just been hit; it knocked me right off the road ... I'm rolling down a steep hill, still rolling down ... oh good, it's stopped now, it's leaning upright against a thick tree trunk. I'm still alive! But very much dazed, the left side of my head is hurting, but it's not bleeding.

PC L RUSSELL

What about the car?

MISS H FRAIL

No, no sign of that; it's not anywhere.

PC L RUSSELL

So, what's happening now?

MISS H FRAIL

Well, I'm really frightened. I've managed to get out of the way of my beloved old car. On my left side I can see many streetlights shining brightly. Moving on ... I've now found

an abandoned old caravan ... the door is wide open ... I'm looking around the inside ... there doesn't seem to be anybody here, hmm ... she's calming down. I've decided to take my chances to stay here for the night.

PC L RUSSELL

(shouts)

So, this car will have to be investigated, and there's no time like the present, because she could still be there. Right, so if it's OK with you I'll come and pick you up and drive you to the Bagley Road.

MISS H FRIAL

What about asking if Brett can come along too? I always remember him; he's that brilliant undercover policeman from London. I'm so glad he's with your lot; you must've made a very good impression on him.

PC L RUSSELL

No, and anyway this might only be a straightforward missing person's case, as far as we know.

MISS H FRAIL

Oh, I see.

(looks out of the lounge window)

Hmm, it's stopped raining and the sun's shining. That's good, so I'll just need to go and find my pink cardigan. I've got a fair idea where it is, and I'll see you soon then. Bye.

#### Scene 4

It's 11.03 a.m. PC Leroy Russell and Miss Hattie Frail are travelling along the Bagley Road.

MISS H FRAIL

We're getting close to where the car is. We need to stop ... right ... now!

(PC Leroy Russell and Miss Hattie Frail get out of the police car)

PC L RUSSELL

(looks on his left side)

Right, by the mess of this grass, I'm guessing the car went down this big hill ... oh yes, I can see it, down there on my left side. It's leaning against that big old oak tree, just like you said, Hattie. Right, so the immediate area will have to be searched; then it'll be secured by tape, before we contact the SOCO and helicopter assistance if that's needed.

MISS H FRAIL

Yes, of course.

### Scene 5

It's 11.19 a.m. the abandoned car and the surrounding area have been thoroughly searched, but there's no sign of Mrs Danielle McManus.

PC L RUSSELL

Look, Hattie, we've been looking for nearly quarter of an hour now and there's absolutely no sign of Danielle anywhere. We've secured the area by tape, so it's now time to call Karen. I won't be long.

(switches on his Smartwatch)

Yes, is that Karen?

MISS K HARVEY

Yes, hello, what can I do for you?

PC L RUSSELL

We need forensics down here, and a helicopter. I'm on the Bagley Road. The car is leaning against a big old oak tree, the one at the bottom of a big hill.

MISS K HARVEY

Yes, I know where you are. I'll let Sir know everything.  
I'll meet you there as soon as I can

PC L RUSSELL

So, Hattie, unfortunately we can't go anywhere until they  
all get here.

MISS H FRAIL  
(looks around)

Yes, I thought so. I didn't want to say anything before, but  
now I'm here, yes ... I can tell you that this was no  
accident; whoever they were, they wanted her dead for  
certain.

(points to her right side)

I'm sensing Danielle, she's awake and I can see her inside  
a caravan. I'm receiving these strange, mixed-up  
messages. I can't quite work it out now, but I can assure  
you she's not in any sort of danger from whoever they are.

(looks over to her left side)

Wait a minute! Yes, there's a small cluster of trees just  
down there, can you see?

PC L RUSSELL  
(turns around)

I can.

MISS H FRAIL

I can sense the caravan's in amongst them, yes, she's  
down there.

(PC Leroy Russell notices his Smartwatch beep)

PC L RUSSELL

Oh hello, Sir.

DI G DORKING

I'm just letting you know that I know all about you and  
Hattie finding Danielle's car from forensics. Well done,  
but also, we may have our first lead: there's been a

burglary of some sorts at Danielle's art gallery and Brett, Claire and Jack are already on the case.

PC L RUSSELL

Oh really? Now that's very interesting. And Hattie has just told me something too. Well, she can feel that this was no accident. Danielle's alive and she's in a caravan; it's situated somewhere in amongst a few trees at the bottom of this hill.

DI G DORKING

Yes, I know of them. Right, I'll contact you when I'm near to the Bagley Road.

PC L RUSSELL

Will do, Sir.

### Scene 6

Meanwhile Constable Claire Mills is inside the art gallery at 23 Brambley Street, Appletown, talking to Miss Elle McManus. DC Jack Cameron is outside surveying the two buildings.

CONSTABLE C MILLS

So, Elle, can you tell us everything you know so far.

MISS E MCMANUS

(upset)

W-well, as soon as I dr-dropped Chris off at h-home, he went straight to sleep on the sofa. I just couldn't rest, because I noticed our ginger Persian cat, Fluffy, wasn't inside. So, I then realised she must've slipped out when I came home. She doesn't like the outdoors ... oh dear. Then I had this phone call from Jock Pearson ... he works for Mum at the art gallery. He said that the back door had been smashed open and her best painting had gone missing. So, what if they've gone and taken Fluffy too? She's a very valuable cat, you know.

(turns around)

You see just here on this wall; there should've been Mum's best scenery painting. Oh, our poor cat, I wonder where she could be ...

CONSTABLE C MILLS

We're sorry to hear about your cat. I'm sure she'll turn up sooner or later, try not to worry; you can always put flyers on a few trees. Am I to assume she's had a microchip put into her skin?

MISS E MACMANUS

Oh yes, of course, you wouldn't ever see me break the law.

CONSTABLE C MILLS

Now, I think we should come back to the painting. Can you describe it, like for instance the exact size, and are there many trees, and did she give it a title?

MISS E MACMANUS

(wipes away her tears)

Oh yes, of course. Well, it's a scenery painting of our Woodsfield Park Lake. I would say its size is thirty-six by twenty-eight inches. It was going to be her most expensive art piece yet. She was going to buy a nice, brand-new piano. Oh, she'll be very upset when she finds out about all this. And she really loves Fluffy; I do hope she'll come back home to us, and I hope Mum's all right too.

CONSTABLE C MILLS

So, who else owns a key and the alarm security code number to this place, other than yourself and Danielle?

MISS E MACMANUS

Well, Dad of course, and there's only Jock Pearson: he works as a part-time cleaner and does the occasional maintenance jobs for Mum; he's here on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, then on every other weekend.

CONSTABLE C MILLS

Where is Jock now? Because I'll need to speak to him.

MISS E MACMANUS

Yes, I'll go and find him straight away.

(exit left)

Scene 7

It's 12 p.m. and Constable Claire Mills is still outside, talking to Jock Pearson.

CONSTABLE C MILLS

(turns around)

So, Jock, can you tell me what you know, please.

MR J PEARSON

Well, when I got to work, which was just a few minutes ago, I noticed that the back door window had been smashed in. So, I immediately tried to get hold of Danielle, but her Smartwatch was switched off. I then decided to tell Elle instead.

(turns around)

Oh, your police officer mate is coming back, and he doesn't look very happy.

DC J CAMERON

(enter right)

Right, yes, I've seen the back door window has been smashed in. But I couldn't see any security cameras; do you have any?

MR J PEARSON:

Ah, well ... this was going to be my next job, so no.

CONSTABLE C MILLS

I'm afraid we'll now have to close everything down until such time as this burglary has been resolved. I'll get onto

forensics right away. Did you touch the window? Because if you did, then we'll have to have your fingerprints taken, for eliminating purposes, of course.

MR J PEARSON

No, I didn't touch it.

DC J CAMERON

(hands over his card)

Thank you for your help, and if there's anything else you can think of, anything at all, here's my card. If you wouldn't mind, could I borrow your keys for a moment so I can go and lock up, please?

MR J PEARSON

(hands over his keys and points to a big brown key)

Yes, of course.

PC J PEARSON

Thank you, I won't be long.

(exit left)

## Scene 8

Meanwhile DI George Dorking has met up with PC Leroy Russell. DC Brett Mellor and Miss Hattie Frail are standing outside, near the caravan, talking to two tall, brunette teenage girls.

DI G DORKING

Excuse me, there's nothing to worry about and you're not in trouble, but could you tell us your names, ages and your home addresses please?

MISS S BINDLEY

My name's Stephanie Bindley and this is my non-identical twin sister Lucy Bindley. We're both eighteen years old, soon to be 19 in exactly a month from today, and we're

living here in this abandoned caravan for the time being.

DI G DORKING

(holds up a photograph of Danielle)

Oh right, thank you for that. Now we've been searching for this lady. She went missing last night. We believe she may have been in a terrible car crash and she'll need to have medical attention straight away. Have you by any chance seen her at all?

MISS L BINDLEY

Yes, we have. We were both out last night, well it was all night in fact. We were in town visiting our friend Gillian, and we just came back about half an hour ago. We found this lady lying down on our sofa. We nudged her to see if she was still alive, and luckily, she came round. Then we gave her some bread and bottled water. We were about to ring you, but then we noticed through the window your police car coming towards us.

DI G DORKING

Thank you for looking after her. I shall now arrange for an ambulance to get here straight away.

### Scene 9

It's 10 minutes later, an ambulance has been ordered, and DI George Dorking, PC Leroy Russell and Miss Hattie Frail are inside the shabby old caravan speaking to Mrs Danielle McManus.

DI G DORKING

Excuse me, my name is DI George Dorking, and this is PC Leroy Russell, and this is Miss Hattie Frail; she's a local psychic who's helping us with our enquiries.

MRS D MCMANUS

(rubs her tiring eyes then touches her short mousy hair)  
What's happening? I had Lucy and Stephanie feeding me bread and bottled water. How did I get here?

DI G DORKING

I just have to ask a few questions, if that's OK?

MRS D MCMANUS

Yes, I suppose so.

DI G DORKING

Could you tell us your name?

MRS D MCMANUS

No, I don't know what it is. I'm sorry.

DI G DORKING

That's understandable, because you've had a bang on your head. Now do you remember if you were you in a car accident last night? And were you aware of having any other passengers with you?

MRS D MCMANUS

(shakes her head from side to side)

I'm sorry, but I don't remember anything about last night. It's all a bit blurry to me. Actually, I don't think I even learned how to drive, let alone had my very own car. Cars are very expensive. I can scarcely afford to buy my food, let alone anything else.

DI G DORKING

(turns to face Miss Hattie Frail)

Look, you'll need to be taken to hospital. An ambulance is coming; it won't be long.

(looks down at his Smartwatch)

Oh, that's just typical, I'm not getting any reception here at all. Right, PC Russell and Hattie, I've got to let central

control know that you've been found. I shouldn't be long.  
(exit left)

MRS D MCMANUS

Wow, I can see the detective has a Smartwatch. He must be absolutely loaded.

MISS H FRAIL

Why would you say that?

MRS D MCMANUS

Well, I think they've only just come out, haven't they?

MISS H FRAIL

No, I'm afraid they've been out for quite a while now.

MRS D MCMANUS

Really? So ...

MISS H FRAIL

(interrupts)

....Oh, I think you're shivering, aren't you?

MRS D MCMANUS

Am I? Oh yes, you're right.

MISS H FRAIL

(removes her pink woolly cardigan)

Look, why don't I put my pink cardigan on you?

MRS D MCMANUS

(snuggles down)

That's very kind of you, thank you, it's very comfy. So, this is all very confusing. I told the truth earlier; I don't remember anything about last night.

(yawns)

Oh, I'm so very tired.

## Scene 10

It's 15 minutes later, DI George Dorking is directing the oncoming ambulance.

PC L RUSSELL

(outside a siren is heard)

Wait a minute; I think I can hear ...

MISS H FRAIL

Ah yes! Speak of the devil, it's the ambulance!

(looks down at her Smartwatch)

Wow, and that must've been in record time!

(enter right DI George Dorking and ambulance staff)

DI G DORKING

Hattie, these ambulance people will be taking Danielle to the Appletown General Hospital. She'll be OK now, and she might even start to remember a few things. I've been told that her family's been notified, and they're going to meet us there. Once again, thank you very much for your brilliant help. Can I take you back home?

MISS H FRAIL

Oh yes, of course. But before I go, there's something you should know: Danielle has absolutely no idea what year it is. She thinks it's about fifteen years ago or so. I don't want to be the one to tell her, so I've left that little problem with you.

DI G DORKING

Oh, right, thanks.

MISS H FRAIL

Well anyway, thank you very much for contacting me and do ring me if you'd like me to help you any further.

(exit left)

## Scene 11

Meanwhile outside at the back of The Black Pig, Constable Claire Mills is speaking to one of her informants, Mr Trevor Butcher.

CONSTABLE C MILLS

(holds up a credit card machine with the number  
50 showing on the screen)

Right, Trevor, what have you got for me? Do you have something regarding this burglary from the art gallery, anything?

MR T BUTCHER

(puts his credit card into the machine)

So, you're looking for a person called Luke McManus. Well, last night I couldn't go to sleep, but then I heard a car parking outside my house, so I decided to look out of my bedroom window. I immediately recognised his old-fashioned black sports car; it was parked close by her building. Then about 15 minutes later I saw him coming back, holding some painting or other under his arm.

CONSTABLE C MILLS

(sighs)

Oh good, so can you tell us the time?

MR T BUTCHER

Yes, I can remember looking at my little clock on my bedside cabinet. So, the exact time was 3 a.m.

CONSTABLE C MILLS

Wait a minute! He's got the same surname as Danielle.

MR T BUTCHER

Sorry, who?

CONSTABLE C MILLS

Danielle McManus, she's the owner of the art gallery and has also been reported as a missing person. So, he could be her brother-in-law maybe. But thinking about it, there are rather a lot of people with that surname living in and around this area.

MR T BUTCHER

I don't know if they're related or not, but I do know he's very rich – he has his own antique business.

CONSTABLE C MILLS

I know I could get hold of it later, but to save time you wouldn't happen to know where he lives, would you?

MR T BUTCHER

(shakes his head)

Ah, that would require another fifty credits, I'm afraid.

CONSTABLE C MILLS

(waves the machine)

Well?

MR T BUTCHER

(puts his credit card back into the machine)

He lives at 23, Pink Lady Avenue.

CONSTABLE C MILLS

There you go, don't get too drunk on it, we may want to speak to you again. And before you go, there is one other thing. We have reason to believe that a big silver car could be involved, with the letter m and the number seven on the registration plates. You wouldn't know of anyone who owns such a vehicle, would you?

MR T BUTCHER

Oh, right ... well no, I haven't heard anything about that! I don't know about registration plates, but if it turns out you're looking for a Mercedes, then I do know of a couple

of people owning a silver-coloured Mercedes. So, it could be Colin Harper's wife Patsy, or it's possibly a Miss Stella Ambrose, she performs as a dancer at The Pink Unicorn in town. I'll have to go now, but if I hear of anything else then I'll ring you. Cheers!

(exit left then enter right into The Black Pig pub)

CONSTABLE C MILLS  
(radios into central control)

It's Claire here, over.

PC R THOMAS  
Richard here, what do you have? Over.

CONSTABLE C MILLS  
(sighs)  
I've got a name for the art gallery burglary, and there's something else that could possibly be connected, over.

PC R THOMAS  
Who is it? Father Christmas? Over.

CONSTABLE C MILLS  
Ha, ha! That's good! Anyway, it's about Paul McManus's rich brother, Luke. So, just by chance Trevor Butcher was a witness to the crime. And we might have a possible lead for the hit and run. Trevor's told me that there is a couple of people he knows who owns a silver Mercedes: there's Mrs Patsy Harper and a Miss Stella Ambrose and get this - she performs as a dancer at The Pink Unicorn in town.

PC R THOMAS  
Oh, right. Now this Patsy, isn't that Colin's other half? Over.

CONSTABLE C MILLS  
Yes, that's right. He's serving time for murder. Perhaps this is a new lead which we could follow up? Over.

PC R THOMAS

Yes, you can leave this to me. And so as to let you know, Brett has just returned from the crime scene a few minutes ago. I'll ask him if he can meet you there. The van is free, so perhaps he can go in that, over.

CONSTABLE C MILLS

Oh right, thanks, over.

PC R THOMAS

Oh, come on, you know you love him really; I've seen the way you both look at each other, over.

CONSTABLE C MILLS

(shouts)

Richard! I've just split up with Drew. I'm not interested in being in another relationship just now. What about you and Josephine? Over.

PC R THOMAS

What about Josephine? Over.

CONSTABLE C MILLS

Well, it's been five years now. Over.

PC R THOMAS

Well, for your information, Claire, I only proposed to her last week. She's said yes, we're marrying next year in July, but we've yet to fix a date, over.

CONSTABLE C MILLS

Oh, that's brilliant news! I shall have to buy a nice new dress, over.

PC R THOMAS

Who says you're invited? Over.

CONSTABELE C MILLS

Ha, ha! Very funny! Over.

PC R THOMAS

Well anyway, I can't come, I've got to be on the desk and there's nobody else available, they're all on other jobs. So, you've got him, over.

Scene 12

It's 12.35 p.m. Constable Claire Mills and DS Brett Mellor are speaking to Luke McManus on the doorstep of 23 Pink Lady Avenue, Appletown. A dog is heard barking in the background.

DS B MELLOR  
(shows his ID badge)

Excuse me, sorry to disturb you, but I'm DS Mellor and this is Constable Mills. So, we're investigating last night's burglary.

MR L MCMANUS  
Oh yes, so Danielle's been burgled, has she?

CONSTABLE C MILLS  
How did you know it was Danielle's business?

MR L MCMANUS  
(shouts)  
Oh right, no, you didn't say that did you? Yes, OK, I took it, but there is a very good valid reason why I did it.

CONSTABLE C MILLS  
Mr Luke McManus, I'm arresting you for burglary. You do not have to say anything, but it may harm your defence if you do not mention, when questioned, something which you rely on in court. Anything you do say may be given in evidence. OK, so we will need a full written statement from you down at the station, but before we go, do you still have the picture in your possession?

MR L MACMANUS

Oh, OK.

(turns left opens up the hallway cupboard  
and hands over the painting)

Here it is, I only wanted to teach her a lesson really. Please can you tell her I'm sorry, but they still haven't paid me what they owe me from way back though, so I know she won't press charges against me. Look, I've had it up to here with them two wasters. I was going to let Danielle sweat for a bit, then I was going to phone her up and tell her I've got it and if she wanted it back, she'd have to cough up.

DS B MELLOR

(takes the picture off his hands)

Of course, and just between us I think she'll understand.

(exit left DS Brett Mellor, Constable Claire  
Mills and Luke McManus)

### Scene 13

It's 20 minutes later, Mr Luke McManus, Constable Claire Mills and DS Brett Mellor are in Appletown Police Station sitting down around a square table in interview room 2 with a recording device switched on.

DS B MELLOR

Now, Luke, just to recap, you say you were at the gallery around 3 a.m. today is that correct?

MR L MCMANUS

Yes, that's right.

CONSTABLE C MILLS

So, when did they start borrowing from you?

MR L MCMANUS

(calms down)

Well, it all started about twelve years ago now. It was

when they got married. Then they kept asking me to pay for all of Elle's violin and Chris's tennis lessons. They've always pleaded poverty; you see they've never paid me back, not a single credit! I knew Paul was away and ...

CONSTABLE C MILLS

So last night you decided it was your turn to take your sweet revenge.

MR L MCMANUS

(assertively)

Yes, that's right. You see last week a friend of mine, Matt Roddy, overheard my brother blabbing in The Black Pig pub. So last night I was absolutely fuming ... Well, about 9 in the evening I was having a drink with Matt in the same pub, and he told me what he had heard ... apparently, they were thinking about going on holiday to Barbados soon after the sale. So, at around midnight, I just went for it. I knew the security alarm wasn't due to be put on until today, so I just smashed in the back door window and took her pride and joy! I's just had enough, so I decided to go and take her most precious piece of all.

DS B MELLOR

So, they wouldn't have paid you anything back after the art gallery sale then?

MR L MCMANUS

No way!

CONSTABLE C MILLS

Right, so at what time did you arrive and leave The Black Pig pub?

MR L MACMANUS

I was in there from around 8 p.m. to just after closing time. They have security cameras in their car park, so they'll be able to give you a precise time. Why?

DS B MELLOR

Well, I'm afraid Danielle's been in a car accident. She

suffered a massive bang on the head. She's in the Appletown General Hospital right at this moment.

MR L MACMANUS

Really? Well, I wouldn't do anything like that to her, that's not my style, no way.

CONSTABLE C MILLS

Would you know of anybody who might want to do her harm?

MR L MACMANUS

So, it wasn't an accident then? Somebody wanted her dead. Wow, this is heavy stuff all right.

DS B MELLOR

We have reason to believe this might be the case, yes.

CONSTABLE C MILLS

So, I repeat my question, do you know of anybody who might want to physically harm Danielle in anyway?

MR L MACMANUS

Well, I know Paul is my brother and all that, but the truth is that he's a real nasty piece of work. I do know that about two years ago he made Danielle sign a life insurance policy. He could've got one of his mates to do it; it wouldn't surprise me if he had. Oh yes, and he has been known to have a few affairs since they got married.

CONSTABLE C MILLS

We'll now let Danielle and her stepchildren know about the painting, and we'll see if she wants to press charges against you.

MR L MCMANUS

Oh no, Danielle isn't that type of person, she just wouldn't do it.

CONSTABLE C MILLS

The doctors should've seen Danielle by now. We'll go to the hospital to give her back this painting. And you'll be released on bail for now.

MR L MCMANUS

Phew! That's a good job, because now I can still look after my dog Trixie.

Scene 14

Meanwhile inside the Appletown General Hospital, Mrs Danielle McManus is sleeping in her bed. Doctor Kevin Jameson, DI George Dorking, Miss Elle and Mr Chris McManus are all talking quietly close by to Mrs Danielle McManus's bed.

DR K JAMESON

So, Danielle has just been tested. She's doing OK, but she's in shock. A few minutes ago, she said she thinks her Christian name's Sue, but she still couldn't tell me her surname. As you can see, we've just had to sedate her for the time being, but we'll need to keep her in for quite a few days – at least a week or so.

MISS E MCMANUS

Sue? That's very strange. I wonder why she thinks that. Anyway, Dad should be home soon.

MR C MCMANUS

(switches on his Smartwatch)

I'll try to get hold of him again.

MISS E MCMANUS

(turns to face Chris McManus)

Oh, and ask him if could stop at the house. He'll need to pack a few suitcases, and don't forget to mention about the

toiletries.

MR C MCMANUS

Ah, good thinking. I won't be long.

(exit left)

MISS E MCMANUS

We'd like to stay here, if that's OK with you.

DR K JAMESON

Yes, that'll be all right.

DI G DORKING

I suppose we can't do much more here at present.

(a beep sound is heard)

Oh, please excuse me, I'm wanted.

(turns away to answer his Smartwatch uses space  
time)

Hello, Claire.

CONSTABLE C MILLS

Sir, right, DS Mellor and I have just this minute recovered the painting. It was Danielle's brother-in-law Luke apparently; he was getting his revenge on the family. But also, it wasn't him who knocked the car over; he was in The Black Pig at the time of the accident, so therefore we're now looking for someone else.

DI G DORKING

I see, thanks for that, well done.

MISS E MCMANUS

(surprised)

Uncle Luke? Why on earth would he want to steal the painting?

MR C MCMANUS

(sighs)

So, you heard.

MISS E MCMANUS

(outraged)

Yes, I did.

MR C MCMANUS

I know that mum and dad owe him quite a lot from way back.

MISS E MCMANUS

I didn't know anything about this. When did you find out, and why didn't anyone tell me?

MR C MCMANUS

Well, I only found out about it by accident myself ... I overheard them discussing it, just before I went on holiday, and I didn't want to worry you, Sis, sorry.

MISS E MCMANUS

Oh well, I know now, so we'll have to find out exactly how much and you and I have to repay him somehow.

MISS H FRAIL

(enter right slightly out of breath)

Ooh, hello, Chris, Elle and Detective Inspector Dorking.

DI G DORKING

Hello, Hattie, what are you doing here? I was just about to try and get hold of you.

MISS H FRAIL

Really? Well, when you drove off from my home, I had just remembered that I'd left my cardigan with Danielle. Instead of bothering you, I decided to drive here myself. So why were you about to ring me?

DI G DORKING

Well, we've recovered the painting. The culprit is Elle and Chris's uncle, no less. But he has a cast-iron alibi regarding the car accident, so it looks as if we're now looking for somebody else. Also, Danielle's adamant that

her Christian name is Sue, and she doesn't know her surname. She was passing in and out of consciousness, so we had to sedate her as soon as possible. She hasn't yet seen her grandchildren, so it's possible she might not recognise them. The doctor isn't worried, but this name of Sue is ringing a bell with me for some reason, I just can't think why.

MISS E MCMANUS

(interrupts)

.....I'm sorry to interrupt, but also this morning our ginger Persian house cat went missing. We're ever so worried about her, as maybe it's connected to what's been going on.

MISS H FRAIL

(gently touches Miss Elle McManus's right shoulder)

Oh dear, I lost a cat myself once, so I do know what you're going through. You must both be at your wits' end. Would you like me to come and help you find her, Elle?

MISS E MCMANUS

Oh yes, that would be great if you could, thank you ever so much.

MISS H FRAIL

(hands over her business card)

Look, here are my contact details if you want to talk to me later.

MISS E MCMANUS

(takes the business card)

Yes, I'll do that, thank you.

DI G DORKING

Hey no, wait a minute. I'm sorry, but I think it would be better if Hattie stayed here for a while to help me with Danielle first.

MISS E MCMANUS

(sighs)

Oh yes, of course, silly me, sorry.

MISS H FRIAL

(turns to face DI George Dorking)

Yes, you're right, of course.

MISS E MCMANUS

Well OK, I'll go back home now.

(turns left to face Chris)

Do you want to come with me and look for her as well, Chris?

MR C MCMANUS

(turns left to face DI George Dorking)

I don't know, what do you think?

DI G DORKING

Yes, it'll be all right, you can go too. We'll keep you informed of any changes.

MR C MCMANUS

OK, I'll go then, if, you're sure.

DI G DORKING

Yes, you go, we'll be in touch soon, no doubt.

MISS E MCMANUS

Bye, and thank you ever so much, the both of you, for helping us.

MISS H FRIAL

Your pleasure.

DI G DORKING

And don't you worry, Danielle's in the right place now. You just go and concentrate on finding your beloved cat.

MISS E MCMANUS

Yes, we will, thank you, bye.

(exit left Elle and Chris McManus)

MISS H FRIAL

(takes her pink woolly cardigan from Danielle's side table)

Oh good, I'm glad I've got my old cardigan back.

DI G DORKING

Right, Hattie, I've just found out that Paul has cheated on Danielle a few times since they've been married; and just recently, they've been arguing about financial matters.

MISS H FRAIL

(shrugs)

As Danielle's been wearing my cardigan, I might be able to pick up a little something; also, I'll need to touch her hand for a few minutes, if that's all right?

DI G DORKING

Yes, that should be fine. I'll go and get something to eat, I'm absolutely starving. Would you like anything?

MISS H FRAIL

Oh, that's very kind, but no, I'm all right, thank you.

### Scene 15

It's 1 p.m. enter right DI George Dorking has just returned from the hospital café. Miss Hattie Frail is telling him what she has discovered about Mrs Danielle McManus.

DI G DORKING

Right, that's very interesting, Hattie. So, what you're suggesting is that you're not sensing Danielle's spirit anymore.

MISS H FRAIL

Yes, that's right. Danielle is now a Sue somebody. I've managed to get two letters, c and n, and they both appear in her surname. She also has two twin girls who are in their late teens.

DI G DORKING

Ah yes, I see, schizophrenia. What about the girls' names?

MISS H FRAIL

No, I'm sorry, I couldn't see the names.

DI G DORKING

Thanks, Hattie, so what about now? Are you staying here to see if you can get any more information, or will you be shooting off somewhere?

MISS H FRAIL

Yes, I could stay here for about half an hour at least. I'll be in touch if I find something significant.

DI G DORKING

Great, but unfortunately, I've got to go now. I've just received a text from Leroy. He's managed to track down a Miss Stella Ambrose at The Pink Unicorn. She's one of the two people from around here who owns a silver car just like you described. She's got a silver Mercedes, so I'm now needed back at the station a.s.a.p. I'll be in touch. Bye, Hattie, thanks again.

(exit left)

### Scene 16

It's 30 minutes later. DI George Dorking, PC Leroy Russell and Miss Stella Ambrose are talking about the car accident.

DI G DORKING

Stella Ambrose, before we start, let me remind you that you are under caution. So, into the tape, can you please start from the beginning.

MISS S AMBROSE

Yes, it was yesterday, about 3 p.m., I was coming home from shopping downtown. I'd hit a wall, which is how I got the dent on the bonnet of my car.

DI G DORKING

Whereabouts, exactly, were you?

MISS S AMBROSE

I was in Pink Lady Avenue, close to The White Horse Inn.

DI G DORKING

That's good, because they've got cctv cameras in that area. They'll be able to clarify that for us. So where were you around 10 p.m. yesterday?

MISS S AMBROSE

No comment.

DI G DORKING

So, you're driving around in a Mercedes. You must earn quite a packet, or did somebody buy it for you?

MISS S AMBROSE

Oh, oh OK, my ex-boyfriend bought it for me.

DI G DORKING

So, who's your ex-boyfriend?

MISS S AMBROSE

No comment.

DI G DORKING

We've been trying to get hold of Mrs Pamela Harper. We've tried her house, and her gymnasium business is closed. You wouldn't know her, by any chance?

MISS S AMBROSE

Um yes, I do, but I'm not friendly with her, she's a real cow! So, this time last year ago we had this massive argument over something, I can't think exactly what it was about, but I can remember her threatening to scratch my car over it. She's a bitch! Anyway, you wouldn't be able to bring her in for questioning, unless you'd want to fly all the way to Spain, that is.

DI G DORKING

Oh, she's in Spain. You wouldn't know when she left, would you?

MISS S AMBROSE

Yes, it was yesterday at around midnight.

DI G DORKING

Thank you for that. We'll get someone onto it straight away. Now, who have you been seeing again?

MISS S AMBROSE

No comment.

(her Smartwatch starts to beep)

PC L RUSSELL

Oh look, there's Paul McManus's face, it's coming up on your Smartwatch. You know him, then?

MISS S AMBROSE

No comment.

PC L RUSSELL

Have you been going out with Paul McManus?

MISS S AMBROSE

No comment.

PC L RUSSELL

I repeat my question: have you being going out with Paul McManus?

MISS S AMBROSE

Yes, OK! He's been seeing me behind Danielle's back! He loves me! He's going to leave her for me!

DI G DORKING

We think you tried to kill her. It's plain and simple jealousy, isn't it? Paul has just worked it out, hasn't he? That's why he's just phoned you up.

MISS S AMBROSE

(switches off her Smartwatch and shouts)

OK! I did do it! And it's because for months Paul kept telling me he was going to leave her, but no, he wouldn't do it! I've been spying on her for weeks, and yesterday I had the perfect opportunity to get rid of her for good. You know the rest. And in any case, I've heard on the grapevine that their stupid cat's gone missing. Now that's a real blessing in disguise, that is, ha!

DI G DORKING

Miss Stella Ambrose, I'm arresting you for attempted murder. You do not have to say anything, but it may harm your defence if you do not mention, when questioned, something which you rely on in court. Anything you do say may be given in evidence. OK, I'm terminating this interview, it's 2. 34 p.m. Sunday the 6th of June 2032.

Scene 17

It's 10 minutes later DI George Dorking is in his office talking to Constable Claire Mills about Miss Stella Ambrose and Mr Paul McManus.

DI G DORKING

(smiles)

So, Claire, Leroy and I have just arrested Stella Ambrose. She's Paul McManus's ex-girlfriend and has confessed to the hit and run.

CONSTABLE C MILLS

(smiles)

Oh wow, that's good.

## Scene 18

It's 2. 50 p.m. DI George Dorking is still in his office talking to Miss Hattie Frail and Constable Claire Mills.

MISS H FRAIL

(enter right)

Hello, detective. Earlier I considered phoning you, but then I thought I'd come and tell you in person, as it's quite important.

DI G DORKING

Yes, Hattie, and before you tell us, we've got some news for you.

MISS H FRAIL

Oh yes, what's that then?

DI G DORKING

It's good news. We've just arrested a Miss Stella Ambrose for the hit and run. Apparently, she's Paul McManus's girlfriend: she wanted Paul to leave Danielle, but he wouldn't do it, so Stella decided to kill her.

MISS H FRAIL

Oh, that's good. Well, I've got something else to tell you.

DI G DORKING

What do you have for us?

MISS H FRAIL

Well, she isn't really Danielle.

CONSTABLE C MILLS

What do you mean, she isn't Danielle?

MISS H FRAIL

I can remember now: it was about fourteen years ago, a local lady called Susan Craven went missing. I think I may have found her for you: Danielle is Sue Craven. Also, I've

just been speaking to Elle: her cat has just been found; she was in their neighbour's shed.

CONSTABLE C MILLS

That's wonderful news. I think I can just remember that a Miss Sue Craven did indeed go missing, and that file is very much still open.

MISS H FRAIL

Yes, and earlier I thought she felt comfortable at that old caravan. Perhaps those two girls I met earlier might be her biological daughters. She must have lived in that caravan before. So, Danielle doesn't have schizophrenia; this is a past life issue. Oh, what about Luke: is he going to be charged, or not?

DI G DORKING

No, the family has let him off. And considering their financial situation, they have made a deal with him. As for Danielle being a missing person, yes, I think you're so right, Hattie, it was about fourteen years ago. And I can also remember it being a Miss Sue Craven. I'm sure her hair was done differently back then, maybe that's why I didn't recognise her. I think her boyfriend was Gavin Rigby; late at night, he was caught up in a street fight, from which he died. She went missing, and her two four-year-old twin girls had to be placed in a children's home. So now we must find out if she's Sue Craven for certain. Then we'll have to do the delicate operation of telling everyone who's involved, including poor old Gavin's parents. Well done, everybody.

(turns to face Miss Hattie Frail)

And Hattie, did you remember to pick up your cardigan?

MISS H FRAIL

(chuckles)

Oh no, I've forgotten it again! I'll have to go back to the hospital on the way back home.

DI G DORKING

So, Hattie, many thanks, and no doubt we'll be in touch again. And once you've collected your cardigan, would you like to join the rest of us at The Black Pig to celebrate my winning the Appletown Golf Tournament over the weekend? And let's also congratulate ourselves for a good job well done, of course.

MISS H FRAIL

You won that? Oh, that's marvellous. I really love playing golf. Perhaps I could give you a game some day? And, yes, thank you, I'll come and join you all once I've collected my cardigan. See you very soon!

DI G DORKING

Now, Claire, what is it I've heard about you going out with Brett?

CONSTABLE C MILLS

Never mind that. What about Richard then? Well ...

*The End*