

## **Mystery / Detective – A Mystery**

Bridget Meave To Clancey

*Jake was suddenly awakened by the loud noise of the television, and found himself alone in a hotel room with his hands tied behind his back. He had a dull pain in his head, and felt dazed and confused. Strangely, he could not remember how he got here. Worse yet, he could not even seem to remember anything about himself – his name, his profession or his friends. As he tried to move, he heard an ominous ticking sound emanating from under the bed. He instinctively realized, somehow, that it was a time bomb even without looking at it. He knew that he had to escape immediately before it was too late...*

Jake tried hard to think straight. It was obvious that someone wanted to kill him, but he had no idea who would be after him nor why. However he first had to figure a way out of this death trap. Jake became very still, held his breath and listened to the only obvious sound in the room. He felt his excited heart thumping widely as he listened intently to the ticking of the time bomb.

“The gap between the second and the third ticks is a second shorter than the other gaps. This must be a quick-quack bomb,” analyzed Jake, but then stopped abruptly: why on earth would he know such details about time bombs? He couldn’t possibly be able to obtain such knowledge unless he was a... Jake abruptly stopped. He didn’t feel like a criminal, but there wasn’t any other explanation which made sense. A quick-quack bomb was seldom used, but its effects were very powerful. It was called “quick-quack” because just a slight movement would trigger the bomb. The wires inside were not covered and moving the bomb would easily set it off. He remembered that the quick-quack bomb got its name from the child who invented it. This child was fascinated by wires and electricity when she was only five years old. She had “accidentally” invented this bomb while randomly attaching wires to lightbulbs and matches. When assembling her bomb, she designed it so that any of the wires would randomly connect. The result was that there were infinite ways of triggering the bomb.

Jake had recalled the history of the quick-quack bomb in a flash, but his head still ached when he tried to remember his name, who were his family and friends, his job...

The ticking suddenly quickened. Jake was pulled back to reality. He realized time was running out. He had to move quickly if he wanted to get out alive. In order to stop the bomb, Jake first had to see of how the bomb was linked to the timer. As the bomb had a complicated structure, he had to quickly find his way through the wire maze. Jake took off his shoes, slowly stretched his arms so that he could slip them under his feet. When his hands were now in front of him, he jumped towards the bed. Using his feet, he pushed the bed aside and had a clear view of the bomb.

“This isn’t that hard. It’s as easy as a baby’s toy,” he thought to himself.

Just as Jake thought he had everything figured out and reached to cut the wire, he heard another sound, the sound of heels clicking. This unexpected new sound made Jake jump. Jake

wouldn't have much time before someone came in. Just as Jake was about to cut the wire, he heard something move behind him. Jake froze. Should he turn around and fight the stranger, or should he cut the wire and dive behind his chair? Jake decided on the latter option. He quickly cut the wire, dove behind the chair and crouched low. He then noticed the sound of clicking heels had stopped. He blamed himself for being careless in not noticing that detail. As the sound behind him inched closer, Jake began to panic. He shouldn't have let his guard down after he had figured out how to stop the bomb. He shouldn't have moved the bed which would immediately alert others that he had discovered the trap. He should have observed the room to find a way out instead of slowly concentrating on stopping the bomb.

The sound stopped in front of him. Jake prepared to jump out to try to catch the stranger off guard. Just as he was about to jump, a small head appeared on his right; a toy poodle was looking at him with adorable eyes. Just as he began to wonder what was happening, the bomb started ticking again, and this time it was ticking very quickly, two times faster than it had been. Jake knew something was wrong. It had been far too easy for a quick-quack bomb to be so easily defused.

Just as the dog began sniffing curiously at his shoe, Jake suddenly realized that the bomb could also be stopped by sonar waves. To increase the effect of the sonar waves, Jake placed one shoe next to the bomb. The echo from inside the shoe amplified the ticking sound. Jake's heart quickened its pace. When the timer on the bomb showed 0.5 seconds left, Jake braced himself for the explosion. Suddenly, all the lights went out. Jake couldn't see anything. This confused Jake even more. What was happening?

Suddenly the blast of bright lights blinded Jake. Jake squinted and looked around. He saw one group of men wearing suits and another group of men wearing white coats clapping. One of the men wearing a suit came over and shook Jake's hand. "Congratulations Jake. You are officially a member of the CIA," said the man. "You must still be puzzled. The effects of the medicine will be over in 10 minutes and you will be able to remember everything. We had to test your instincts to see, whether without any memory or information, you could respond under pressure. Well done."

Jake's head was still pounding as he tried to take in this latest information. Was this guy telling the truth or was "this new reality" just another illusion?