

## The Insiders

“Millie, what’s wrong? What is that horrible racket?”

“Oh, Philip, it’s terrible! That’s the alert; something’s happened!”

“I can barely hear you, Millie!”

“Here, let me go in the pantry. There, is that better?”

“Much. Now, tell me what is going on.”

“I don’t know exactly, but the alert started, and the army captain here came over the speakers and gave the code word that says the princess has been attacked! Now the soldiers are all rushing about with their rifles, and we’re all trying to get out of the way, and I don’t know what I’ll do!”

“Millie, Millie, don’t cry. You just stay quiet somewhere. When things calm down some, find out what has happened, then ring me back.”

“But, Phillip, it happened not long after she left, after I phoned you! What if we caused this? I thought it was just journos wanting to sneak a photo!”

“It’s okay, Millie, it’s just a coincidence. I’ll see if I can reach that fellow again, maybe he knows something. You just sit tight.”

“All right. I’m worried sick, though.”

“I know. Ring me back later. Love you.”

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“Get me more information, Malloy. Now.”

“But I don’t understand, Mr. Stone. Why do you need me to find out what’s happened? Aren’t your journals there somewhere? We don’t want anything else to do with this!”

“Listen very carefully, Malloy. You’re in this up to your arse; I’ve paid you for information and have the proof. And besides, your girlfriend’s sick mum that you needed the money for? I know where she is in hospital. I am not the man you want to make angry, Malloy. You find out what the hell has happened, and you do it right now!”

“All right! I’ll try! But I’m not there; I’m in London!”

“But your little girlfriend’s there, so you ring her back, get me some info, and ring me back. You’ve got 30 minutes, or I’m on my way to visit a sick old lady.”

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“You took your sweet time, Malloy; time’s almost up.”

“It’s not that easy! She’s just a cook; she can’t go around asking questions! All she was able to find out is that someone attacked the princess’s convoy and killed all her security. But someone else got involved and stopped the attack. Millie says the army has everything locked up tight, and there are helicopters flying around.”

“Well, that’s something. You try again every 30 minutes. Get me more. Don’t make me angry.”

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“You have *got* to be kidding me.”

“No, Mr. Stone, that’s what she said. Two American tourists came upon the attack and intervened. One is badly wounded and both are in Balmoral, along with Princess Elizabeth and the children. I don’t think I’ll be able to get much more from Millie; she’s hysterical now. All she does is cry.”

“That’s enough for now, but you’ll get me more tomorrow. She’ll calm down by then.”

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“Just hold me, Phillip; I’ve been so frightened.”

“I know, I know. I’ve been worried sick about you, but they wouldn’t let anyone in. It’s okay now.”

“But, Phillip, it’s not okay! We did this! We told them when she was leaving; it’s our fault!”

“I know, dear one. I’m sick to think of what else might have happened.”

“I don’t know if I can live with myself, Phillip. And the palace security wants to interview me again tomorrow.”

“Hush, Millie.”

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“Nigel Barstow, back again. And in other news, a young couple was found dead in northeast London in a garage. They appear to have committed suicide together by running their motorcar inside the closed garage. Sources tell us that the woman was a cook at the palace and was at

Balmoral the day of the attack on Princess Elizabeth. It is not known if the two incidents are related.”