

An Inspector Holt Story

CATS IN THE DARK

JOHN TULLY



Collins English Library

Collins English Library

Series editors: K R Cripwell and Lewis Jones

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Collins English Library Level 1

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**CATS
IN THE DARK
JOHN TULLY**

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Chapter One

Bill Ojo went home after a long day's work. He telephoned a girl. "Come and have dinner with me, Ann," he said.

"Sorry, Bill. I can't tonight," said Ann. "Tomorrow perhaps."

Bill went out to dinner without Ann. He went to the Blue Bird Cafe. It was eight o'clock in the evening.

At 8.30 a girl came into the cafe. She was young and very beautiful. She looked round for a table. She said to Bill, "Can I sit here?"

"Please do," said Bill.

"My name is Sylvia."

"How do you do? My name is Bill."

They had dinner and talked. Bill looked at his watch. It was ten o'clock. "Can I get you a drink?" he asked.

"I've got drinks at my place," said Sylvia. "We can go there."

"That's OK with me," said Bill.

He went with Sylvia to her rooms. She lived on the top floor of a house. She opened the door to her rooms.

"You go into the sitting room," she said. "I must get the drinks."

Sylvia went into the kitchen. Bill opened the sitting room door. There was no light in the room. He stopped. His foot touched . . . what? It was very dark. He looked for the light switch. The light came on.

There was a man on the floor – a big, tall man – face down, arms out.

"Sylvia! Come here!" said Bill.

She came in. She looked at the man on the floor.

"Jim! It's Jim! Help him . . .!"

"We can't help him," said Bill. "He's dead."

"Oh . . . oh . . . no . . ."

Bill helped the girl into an armchair. "Who is he?" he asked.

"My brother. Jim Wright."

"Some person killed him with a gun," said Bill.

"A shot in the head."

Bill telephoned the Police Station. He telephoned Inspector Holt too. Then he went back to Sylvia.

"Who killed your brother? Do you know?"

"No."

"Was he here tonight, before you went out?"

"No. But he comes here sometimes, to see me."

"Can he get into these rooms?"

"Yes. He can open the door."

"Was there *any* person here, before you went out?"

"No."

"Who wanted to kill him?"

"I don't know. I can't think. Please, I can't talk any more . . ."

Policemen came to the rooms. Holt came with them.

"Tell me all about it," said Holt. He listened to Bill's story. It was now after 11 o'clock. "You've got a lot of work to do," he said. "You go home now. Get some sleep. I can work on this."

Bill went home. Holt looked at the body. He looked round Sylvia's rooms. There was nothing to help him. He asked Sylvia about her brother.

"He's 22 years old," said Sylvia. "He's a school teacher. He lives with my mother and father at Horsley. That's a village thirty kilometres from here. He came to see me last week. He was very happy then. He said, 'I've got a new girl friend. I love her very much.'"

Holt asked more questions. Sylvia said, "I can't help you any more, Inspector. Please can I go now? I don't want to sleep here tonight."

"Where are you going?"

"To Horsley. To mum and dad."

"Very well. You can go."

A woman came to the door. "Why are the police here?" she asked. "What's it all about?" Holt

went to talk to her. Her name was Mrs Fowler. She lived in three rooms on the top floor.

“Do you know Miss Wright’s brother?” asked Holt.

“He comes here to see Miss Wright,” said Mrs Fowler. “I see him go by sometimes.”

“He went by your door tonight. What time was it?”

“Tonight? Oh, I don’t know. I was in my rooms all evening.”

“Two people came to Miss Wright’s rooms tonight. He was one of them. Can you hear people go by?”

“Sometimes. But my television was on. I don’t hear much with that on. I’m sorry I can’t help you.”

“You can hear some things, perhaps? Like a gun going off?”

“A gun?”

“Yes. There was a gun-shot in Miss Wright’s rooms this evening.”

“Now you tell me – yes, there *was* a gun-shot. It was about 9.45. I was in my bedroom. The TV is in my sitting room. You often hear gun-shots on TV. I hear a ‘bang’ and I think, ‘Oh, it’s the television.’ ”

“At 9.45?” said Holt. “Thank you, Mrs Fowler.”







Chapter Two

In the morning Bill went to the police station. He went to his room. Peter, a young policeman, was there.

"Good morning, Peter," said Bill. "Where's my report on the bank robbery?"

"It's here," said Peter.

"Thanks. I'm still looking for the robbers. Find pictures for me. Pictures of 'wanted' men. All we've got, please."

"OK," said Peter. He went out of the room.

Bill looked at his report. It said:

JUNE 3rd. 2.00 p.m. A green car, YLW 245S, stopped in Duke street, by the National Bank. There were two men in the car.

2.30. The men were still in the car. A man in the bank telephoned the police.

2.35. I was in a police car in Duke Street. A radio call came through: "Go to the National Bank. Two men sitting in a car. What are they doing there?"

2.36. A white car, TMG 506T, came up to the bank. It stopped behind the green car. Mr Harold Taylor was in the white car. He takes money to the bank every week. It is always a lot of money.

The two men came from the green car. One was tall, one short. They had cloths over their heads. They went up to Mr Taylor. They had guns in their hands. The tall man said, "Give me the money." Mr Taylor answered, "Don't fire. You can take the money."

2.37. I came down the street in my car. The two robbers had the money. They went back to their car. I stopped my car in front of theirs. The white car was behind. The robbers' car had no way out.

"Run for it," said the tall man.

The short man went off up the street fast. The tall man went over the road. He had the money. I went after him. He stopped. There was a short fight. The cloth came off his head. His face was close to mine. Then his foot came up at me. I went down in the road on my back. He was off again before I was on my feet. He went down a small street. I went after him, but he was not there.

Bill looked up from the report. Peter came back with the pictures. They were pictures of men 'wanted' by the police. Some were new, some old. Bill looked at them.

"Can you find him?" asked Peter.

Bill stopped at one of the pictures. It was an old

one. "Yes. This is the man. That's his face. Who is he?"

Peter looked at the back of the picture. "His name is Steve Anderson. He's 28 years old. He was 'in' for five years. For taking money with a gun."

"He's doing the same thing again," said Bill.

"He came 'out' last January. He's living at Number 17, Argyll Street."

"Thanks, Peter," said Bill. "Perhaps I can find him now."

Chapter Three

Inspector Holt was in Horsley. He talked to Sylvia's father.

"My wife is in bed," said Mr Wright. "She's very ill because of this. Sylvia is with her. Our son dead! Why?"

"Can you think of an answer?" asked Holt.

"No, I can't. He was a good boy. He had lots of friends. People liked him very much."

Holt went to Jim Wright's school. The teachers

said the same things: "He was a good man. He worked well. He helped people. Who wanted to kill him? We don't know."

But one teacher said more. "Jim had a fight last week. With one of his friends, Roy Thomson."

"Tell me about it," said Holt.

"It was on Saturday. Jim and I went for a walk by the river. Roy Thompson was there with a girl, Jane Hadley. They were hand in hand. But Jane was Jim's girl friend.

"Jim went up to them. Jane said, 'I'm going out with Roy. Please go away.' Jim went red in the face. 'I won't go without you,' he said. Then Roy said, 'She doesn't want you now. Go on, get out of it.'

"After that there was a fight. Poor Roy! He went feet-over-head into the river. Jane helped him out. He was wet through. Jim walked off, and I went after him."

Holt went to Jane Hadley's home. She was there.

"I don't want to talk about Jim," she said.

"You must answer my questions," said Holt.

"Oh, very well. It's true about the fight on Saturday. Jim came to see me on Sunday. He was sorry. He asked me to go out with him. I said, 'I'm not going out with you any more. I don't want to see you again.' After that he went away.

"But on Monday night he came back. 'Please talk to me,' he said. I said, 'I don't want to talk to