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Love or Money?

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OXFORD BOOKWORMS

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Chapter 1

The Clarkson family lived in the country near Cambridge, about half a mile from the nearest village and about a mile from the river. They had a big, old house with a beautiful garden, a lot of flowers and many old trees.

One Thursday morning in July, Jackie came in from the garden. She was a tall, fat woman, thirty years old. It was the hottest day of the year, but she wore a warm brown skirt and yellow shirt. She went into the kitchen to get a drink of water. Just then the phone rang.

'Cambridge 1379,' Jackie said.



The Clarkson family had a big, old house with a beautiful garden.

‘Hello. This is Diane. I want to talk to Mother.’

‘Mother isn’t here,’ Jackie said. ‘She’s at the doctor’s.’

‘Why? What’s wrong?’

‘Nothing’s wrong,’ Jackie said. ‘Why are you telephoning? You *are* going to come this weekend? Mother wants everyone to be here.’

‘Yes, I want to come,’ Diane said. ‘I’m phoning because I have no money for the train ticket.’

‘No money! Mother is always giving you money!’

‘This phone call is very expensive,’ Diane said coldly. ‘Tell Mother please. I need the money.’

Jackie put the phone down. She took a cigarette from her bag and began to smoke. She felt angry because her sister always asked for money. Diane was twenty years old, the youngest in the family. She lived in London, in one room of a big house. She wanted to be a singer. She sang very well but she could never get work.

Jackie went back into the kitchen and began to make some sandwiches. Just then the back door opened, and her mother came in.

‘It’s very hot!’ Molly said. She took off her hat and put it down on the table. She was a tall, dark woman with beautiful eyes.

Two big, black dogs came into the kitchen after her and ran across to her. She sat down and put her hands on their heads.



'Mother,' Jackie said, 'Diane phoned. She wants money . . .'

Jackie put the sandwiches on the table. 'Mother,' she said, 'Diane phoned. She wants money for her train ticket.'

Molly closed her eyes for a minute. Then she stood up. 'This afternoon I want you to get the house ready for the weekend,' she said. 'Oh, and please go to the village later and get my tablets.'

'Yes, Mother,' Jackie said.

Molly went to the door.

'Mother, please wait a minute,' Jackie said. 'Peter Hobbs came here this morning. He's very angry with you about that letter. He lost his job, you know. Why did you write to his office? He wants to talk to you about it.'

‘Well, I don’t want to talk to him,’ Molly said. She opened the door.

‘But Mother, you don’t understand. He’s seventeen, and it was his first job. He’s very, very angry. He says . . . he says he’s going to kill you!’

Molly did not answer. She went out of the room and closed the door.

Chapter 2

It was seven o’clock on Saturday evening. Jackie stood at the window. A car drove slowly up to the front door and stopped. A tall man with white hair got out. It was Albert, the husband of Molly’s sister.

‘Here’s Uncle Albert,’ Jackie said. ‘Always late.’

She went out of the room and opened the front door. Albert came in and went at once to Molly.

‘Oh, dear. I’m very late. I *am* sorry,’ Albert said. ‘Fifty years old today! What a wonderful dress!’

Molly did not smile. ‘Thank you, Albert. We’re all getting older.’ Tonight she wore a long black dress, and the two black dogs sat at her feet. ‘Everyone is here now. Let’s go in to dinner,’ she said.

Everyone stood up and went to the table.

‘The table looks nice, Jackie. What wonderful flowers!’ Diane said. She was a beautiful girl, with long



'The table looks nice, Jackie. What wonderful flowers!' Diane said.

Love or Money?



It is Molly Clarkson's fiftieth birthday. She is having a party. She is rich, but she is having a small party – only four people. Four people, however, who all need the same thing: they need her money. She will not give them the money, so they are waiting for her to die. And there are other people who are also waiting for her to die.

But one person can't wait. And so, on her fiftieth birthday, Molly Clarkson is going to die. [Word count 6,010]



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- ◀ STAGE 3
- ◀ STAGE 2
- ◀ **STAGE 1**
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? CRIME & MYSTERY

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