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Turn a Blind Eye

by Miriam Silver

Feeling like an interloper I opened the front door to the terraced house that had not been my home for more than twenty years, momentarily expecting a welcome. There was none of course. Silly me, you've just come from a funeral, get on with it.

Taking off my coat, automatically hanging it up on the hook, I pushed open the door on my left, as I remembered, two small rooms made into one, separated by a sideboard, dark oak I think, framed photos of me at my graduation with both of them their only son, on its dusty surface.

My days spent there came flooding back, how I would rush in after school, starving, knowing my Mum would be there or food would be ready under a 'back soon' note, helping Dad with his pigeons later when I'd completed my homework.

Quickly overcoming any further nostalgia I found some Christmas whiskey which restored me to my grown up legal self and started looking for the papers needed for probate. Dad didn't have a desk, paper work would have been left to Mum, but as he'd been on his own for a few years it seemed I was going have a long job.

Tentatively opening a drawer in the sideboard I discovered it was crammed with papers, and so were all the others. There was no desk, all that remained of his life was here, no interest to anyone except me, left wondering how he had spent his later time.

Feeling like an intruder I began sorting, services, bank statements and receipts and managed to empty one drawer then feeling a bit sad, decided I needed a pub break and took myself off to the local, where a couple of people gave me their

condolences and said how much they were going to miss my Dad, especially his jokes.

On the second day, still feeling I shouldn't be looking at his stuff, I had emptied all the drawers, found outstanding bills, completed the sorting leaving only any Will he may have written to find. He had never shared anything personal with me, not even jokes, which meant another search, as far as I knew he didn't have a solicitor,

Drawers all empty, I started on the upstairs, bathroom, double bedroom, my erstwhile room, bringing back memories of posters and music, long gone. I'll never know what made me look into the wardrobe, but I did, and found a small case tucked well back.

Expecting this to contain holiday photos only, my amazement grew, making me sink onto the bed. The papers, in my fathers handwriting dated some 25 years ago revealed a well hidden secret.

My unwilling self uncovered letters and documents which related to my Dad's prison sentence. He had been considered an accessory to a robbery, served a five year sentence, that was when I was very small apparently, all supported by the newspaper cuttings. Details of his trial were there too, nothing had been recovered, he'd been released, lived a quiet life, leaving a case still under investigation.

In spite of my inherent feelings regarding robberies, which always mean there are victims, I read on to find my Dad had left letters to his accomplices, envelopes clearly labelled, to me to them and a Map.

Mine contained his wishes, that I find his mates, and give them the map, no further elaboration or explanation all dated twenty years ago.

I suppose I must call it his Will. That being so, I am obliged by law to carry out his wishes, which puts me in an impossible position. I do not mix socially with criminals.

They could have moved or even died, In all probability I would never find them. Whatever way I looked at this situation I was in trouble, I had the choice, to look for them or perhaps turn a blind eye.

