

MYSTERY *on* **CAMPUS**

A FLAUGHERTY TWINS MYSTERY

Book 2

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Mystery on Campus

Pat and Patty Flaugherly are drawn into their second mystery by an old friend who is now in college. When he appears on their doorstep with a “little problem” that he is reluctant to divulge, the twins are quickly caught up in an investigation of a scheme to launder counterfeit money throughout their home state.

The mystery moves to the university campus where Pat and Patty search for missing school supplies and end up finding a campus secret that helps their friend and also leads them to solve a 35-year-old murder case in the *Mystery on Campus*.

I

A Disturbing Visit

“Anything in the mail for me?” 17-year-old Pat Flaugherly called to his twin sister. He had been swimming in their backyard pool and was still toweling himself dry as he stepped out onto the front porch.

Patty looked up from where she stood near the mailbox, her blue eyes twinkling. “Why should I tell you?” she laughed, shaking her long dark hair back off her shoulders. “Are you expecting something important?”

“No.” Pat ran his hands through his damp black curls, trying not to sound perturbed. It was too pretty of a morning for that. “But it would be nice to get a straight answer.”

“Okay, okay.” Patty thumbed through the mail. “Just a coupla bills, some junk mail, and—” She paused, pulling one letter from the stack. “What have we here?”

Pat draped the towel over his shoulder then ambled across the grass until he stood at the girl's side. “Who's it from, Patty?”

“State University,” she told him. “And look, we each got one.” She looked up at her brother. “We didn't forget to send them our college board scores or

something, did we?”

“Hey, sis, with scores like I got,” Pat boasted, “we don't have to send them to the school. The school'll come to me.”

“Ha ha, really funny,” she said. “You're lucky if they'll even accept you with scores like you had.”

Just then, a car horn beeped. Pat and Patty turned to see a sleek emerald green Corvette pull up to the curb in front of them. The horn sounded again as the driver leaned out the window and waved. The twins immediately recognized Ted Nichols, an old friend from Temple High. He was graduated now and attended the university where he played on the varsity football team.

Ted squeezed his big frame out of the car, brushing aside a mop of wavy light brown hair with a meaty hand, then grinned at the twins. He was wearing his college letter jacket.

“Pat! Patty! Haven't seen you guys in ages.” He pumped Pat's hand then gave Patty a great bear hug. Stepping back from the girl, he gazed at her through dark brown eyes.

“You've grown up a lot since I last saw you,” he remarked, his smile mellowing.

“It's been a long time, Ted.” Patty suddenly felt awkward. She couldn't look the older boy in the eye. “We all change.”

“You gettin' melancholy on me?” He grinned again. He gently pushed up on her chin with his index finger so that her gaze met his. She smiled sheepishly at him.

“Sure, we all change,” Ted agreed. “Hopefully for the better.”

The older boy led the twins up the gently sloping lawn to the front porch, depositing himself heavily on a brightly cushioned redwood chair. Pat and Patty sat down opposite him.

“I need to talk to you guys about something important,” he said as he looked from one twin to the other. “But first, tell me what's been happening with you all this time?”

“Not much really,” Pat said. “Except maybe that Bob and I are shoo-ins for the varsity football team this fall.”

“I made some iced tea,” Patty suddenly said. “I'll get it for us.” She dropped the handful of letters onto the end table, rose from her chair, then slipped through the screen door into the house.

Ted glanced up curiously at her retreating figure then turned to Pat. “What were you saying? Oh, yeah—football.” He smiled affectionately at the teen. “Well, I had no doubts about you, Pat, my boy, ever since I saw you at freshman tryouts. I knew you were star material.” He chuckled softly.

“Now I wouldn't go that far,” Pat said. “Sure, you were senior state champ back then, but that doesn't mean everybody else wants a career in professional football. I mean there's lots of guys on that team who could be headed for football careers, and believe me, they've got the talent for it. But I don't think I want that. I like football and all, you understand, but as a sport, a hobby—not a career.”

Pat gratefully accepted a tall glass of iced tea from his sister as she rejoined the boys on the porch. “How about you?” he asked the older boy. “You looking forward to the majors' drafts this coming spring?”

“Hey, I'm only going to be a junior this year,” Ted told him as he took his glass from the girl. “I want to get my degree before anything else.”

“What are you gonna do with that piece of paper once you're playing professional ball?” Pat joked.

Ted took a long gulp of his tea, wiping his mouth with a huge forearm. He looked Pat squarely in the eye. “That's kind of what I wanted to talk to you

two about,” he began slowly. “I don't think I'm gonna go on to professional ball.” He looked down at the floor, disappointment in his voice. “I don't even think I'd be playing right now if I wasn't on scholarship. Coach doesn't know. Otherwise, I don't think they'd let me keep the scholarship.”

“But why, Ted?” Patty leaned forward, suddenly interested in the discussion. “You could easily make it in professional football. I remember in high school you used to talk about practically nothing else. I thought football was your life.”

“You said yourself that people change,” he murmured. “And I guess since I've been at State, I've changed.” He paused a moment, his brow furrowed. He seemed to be searching for the right words. Then he continued, “I've found something better.”

“Better?” Pat interjected. “What could be better?”

“Art,” Ted said simply.

“Art?” Even Patty was surprised.

Ted's eyes lit with enthusiasm. “Sure,” he told them. “It's fantastic. And I found it totally by accident. You see, my counselor knew I was on a football scholarship, and being the good fellow he was, he suggested some easy courses I could take just to fill requirements for my degree. Seems he played a little college ball and knew I'd appreciate the special consideration. What a jerk! Just 'cause a guy plays ball, they think you don't want anything else outa college.” He eyed Pat meaningfully. Pat blushed in embarrassment.

“But I guess at the time I really didn't want anything else anyway. I was a cocky son-of-a-gun then, fresh outa high school with a state championship title already. So I took this cake course in art—intro to painting, sculpting, engraving—you name it, and you know what?” He looked from Pat to Patty. “The prof said I had talent. Real honest-to-goodness talent. He thought I could

really go somewhere if I just applied myself to it. He's even sold a few of my paintings already." Ted paused to sip his tea once more.

"C'mon," Patty coaxed. "There's more to this story."

"Well," Ted began again, licking his lips in satisfaction, "I didn't do anything about it at first. I thought it'd be a nice hobby, and when I decided to retire from professional ball, I might do something about it. But what the prof said to me, it stuck with me for a good while, just naggin' at me. And when I got tired of football, it just seemed like the natural thing to get into."

"*You* just got tired of football," Pat laughed. "Yeah, right!"

"Pat, it's different from high school ball," Ted explained. "High school is kid's stuff—fun and games—and I liked that. But college ball is mean. And professional ball is meaner. I've even heard of coaches buying their players with fancy cars and stuff like that."

"Well, isn't that how you got your car?" Pat asked.

Ted's face screwed up like he'd just bitten into a lemon. "No!" he retorted. "The school that gave me the car ... the coach said I was under no obligation to pick their school—it was a gift. And when State offered me a full scholarship, it was a no-brainer." He grinned at them. "I picked State and got to keep the car too."

"So, the problem is—?" Patty coaxed.

"Well, it's this whole culture," Ted tried to explain. "You've got the coaches that'll even go as far as getting grades changed for their players if they don't pass a course. And you've got some of the profs who are like my counselor, and if they know you play ball, they pass you even if you never show up for class. I guess they figure that's doing their part for school spirit. It's disgusting."

Ted took another swig of his tea, emptying the glass. He set it down with

a thud on the redwood end table then continued, “I mean I want to know that the grade I get is for the work I do in class, not for what I do on the football field.”

“So, that kind of stuff goes on at State?” Pat asked.

“Some of it,” Ted agreed. “Now our coach is an honest joe. He doesn’t do that kind of stuff. Sometimes he’ll even go the opposite way, making up dumb rules about so many hours of study a night. I mean I can make that decision myself about whether or not I need to study.”

“I don't get it,” Pat said. “It doesn't sound like there should be a problem at State with a coach like that.”

“I wish,” Ted sighed. “A lot of guys on the team do that kind of stuff behind Coach's back. I've already heard guys threaten teachers, and you can bet they got grades changed.”

“Wow,” Patty exclaimed. “It does sound like there's a problem.”

“You better believe it,” Ted said with feeling. “And I'm sick of the whole big rotten underhanded game. That's why I want out.”

“But, Ted, you're good,” Pat exclaimed. “You've got a chance for a great career in professional ball. You can make it without involving yourself in any of that stuff. Why do you have to let that discourage you?”

“It's more than that, Pat,” Ted answered. He frowned, his face clouding over.

Patty suddenly realized that Ted was no longer looking directly at her brother. He seemed to look past him down into the street. She followed his gaze to where the Corvette was parked at curbside. A tall blond-haired jogger wearing a bright-colored tank top was just passing by. His pace slowed only a little as he glanced up at the group on the porch then continued on his way.

Ted hesitated a moment then composed himself. “You know, maybe I

shouldn't be talking to you two about this. Maybe this was a really bad idea. Let's just drop the whole thing.” There was an embarrassing silence for a moment as Patty watched Ted, who seemed to be dividing his attention between her brother and the quickly retreating jogger.

Finally, Pat spoke up. “Hey, how about staying for a swim?” he suggested, eyes brightening. “I could lend you a pair of trunks, and we can talk over old times. The water's fine. I was in already this morning.”

“Sounds great to me.” There was relief in Ted's voice. “But I don't know if you'll have any trunks to fit me. You were always such a skinny little kid.” He playfully punched at Pat's stomach. “How much you weigh anyhow?”

“Bout 180.” Pat seemed hurt. “And that's not bad for my height!” He stood, fists on hips to emphasize his point.

Ted stood also, towering several inches over Pat. “Why, you ain't even six foot yet, are you?”

“Five eleven's not bad,” Pat returned evenly. “And for my height, I'm what they consider trim. That's what you need in the backfield. I mean if I was playing tackle like you, I might want to be as chunky as you are.”

“Chunky?” Ted feigned anger. He ruffled Pat's hair playfully. “Gimme a pair of those trunks. I'll squeeze into them somehow.”

He turned to look at Patty, who sat silently sipping her iced tea. “You goin' for a swim too?”

Pat chuckled. “She's waiting for Bob to come over. Doesn't want to mess up her hair 'til after he gets here.”

Patty's gaze dropped to the floor as her cheeks flamed.

“Hey, who's this Bob character anyway?” Ted asked, looking from one twin to the other.

“You remember Bob Daily,” Pat said. “He was with me the day I went for

freshman tryouts, the day you picked me out as star material.”

“You mean that little blond-haired squirt you used to always hang around with?” Ted grinned. “He was built more for football than you were even if he was awful short back then.”

“We all change, Ted,” Patty’s voice was cold. “Pat”—she gestured to her twin—“why don't you go get Ted his trunks?”

“He can come with me,” Pat argued. “It's only—”

He stopped in midsentence as Patty frowned darkly at him. “I'll be back, Ted,” he finally said then disappeared through the screen door.

Ted sat down across from Patty and took her slender hands into his meaty ones. “Is there somethin' between you and this Bob guy?” he asked softly and sadly.

Patty sat silently for a moment, not wanting to meet Ted's questioning gaze. Finally, she looked up at him. “Yes. Yes, there is, Ted.”

She paused a moment then, trying to gather her thoughts and her courage. “Bob and I are seeing each other,” she finally said. “He just gave me this.” She pulled a delicate gold neck chain out from underneath her top. On the end dangled a slender gold band mounted with two diamonds.

“We've been dating for a little while now,” she continued. “I waited for a while after you stopped writing and calling, but then I figured it didn't matter to you, so when Bob asked me out, I started seeing him.” She gazed sadly into his eyes. “Why did you stop?”

“Just too busy, I guess.” Ted sighed deeply. He dropped his hands and stared absently off into the distance. “Sometimes you don't realize what you've got 'til it's not yours anymore.”

“Oh, Ted”—Patty reached out to him this time—“you know we'll always be friends. That'll never change.”

Looking back at the girl, he smiled faintly. “Thanks. I knew that.”

“And I'm sure you'll like Bob,” she said, her tone lighter. “He's really wonderful—and he's much taller than he was then. About as big as Pat. He's good at football, and he's an excellent swimmer. He's already broken some records at school. But, oh”—her hand suddenly flew to her mouth—“he's terribly shy. And I hate to say this, but he used to be afraid of you.”

Ted's eyebrows raised in surprise.

“Well, you see, I found out that Bob always liked me,” Patty continued. “But when I started seeing you when I was in ninth grade, he didn't come around for a while. Before that, he was always at our house—with Pat, you know. He told me after you'd gone to college that he was scared that you and I were serious and he thought he'd lost his chance with me.”

“But?” Ted interjected.

Patty looked up at the bigger boy, her eyes meeting his. “But I stopped hearing from you,” she said. “So I guessed you weren't as serious as I thought.”

Ted sighed. “I'm sorry. I just got caught up in the college thing. And you were so far away ...” His voice trailed off.

“Oh, I don't blame you now,” Patty wanted to clarify. “Ted, you've always been special to me. You're a really nice guy and a lot of fun, but I think that's all it was meant to be.”

“I could still see you though,” Ted suggested, hope in his voice. “Just for fun, you understand.”

“Ted, I don't know,” Patty hedged. “I don't think it'd work now. I just—”

“Here they are!” Pat called as he stepped back onto the porch. He held up a pair of colorful swim trunks. “I found the biggest pair I could,” he chuckled. “And if these don't fit, we could always pin an old curtain together for you.”

“Lay off, Pat.” Ted smiled forcefully as he grabbed the trunks from the

dark-haired boy.

“Sorry.” Pat dropped into an empty chair and picked up the discarded mail. “So what's this letter about, Patty?”

“Oh, I forgot about those.” Patty picked up the envelope addressed to her and tore the seal. “It's a letter from the university,” she explained to Ted as she unfolded the sheet. She scanned the lines for several seconds, her eyes lighting with excitement.

“Pat, this is wonderful!” she cried. “Remember that Careers in Education program we applied for at school? I got accepted!”

Pat quickly opened his letter, a smile spreading across his face. “Me too!” he said. Then noticing Ted's puzzled expression, he explained, “It's a program the university sponsors through area high schools. They choose a few students from each school to participate in a one-week seminar on their chosen career at the university. For me, there'd be talks by professional newspaper reporters and editors, and then some of the teachers from the Journalism Department would hold workshops in news gathering and stuff.”

“It's open to any student who's considering the liberal arts,” Patty added. “And the program starts next week on the same day as the summer term begins.”

“A week of college life,” Pat considered excitedly as he looked over the typed sheet. “Living in the dorms, attending classes—it oughta be exciting.” He turned to Ted. “Are you gonna be up there for summer term?”

Ted looked at the floor, his expression dour. “Yeah,” he mumbled.

“Great!” Pat exclaimed. “Where will you be staying? I'm in, ah ...” He glanced back at the letter. “It says Jordan Hall, second floor.”

“I'm in the same building, on the first floor,” Patty said as she scanned her letter. “I guess all the students in the program are being housed together.”

Ted stood hurriedly and stepped off the porch, tossing the trunks back to Pat. “Hey, I ... I gotta go. Sorry I can't stay for the swim, but I ... well, I got some errands to run. I'll catch you guys later,” he called as he trotted down the lawn to his parked car. Just as he pulled open the car door, a brown Mustang with a white racing stripe pulled up to the curb behind him. Out stepped a handsome teen with blond hair and a deep suntan.

“Bob!” Patty waved and raced down the lawn to the blond-haired youth. She took him by the hand and led him to where Ted stood by his car.

“You remember Ted Nichols, don't you, Bob?” she asked.

Bob extended his arm and shook the older boy's hand. He half-smiled then murmured shyly, “Hi, Ted.”

Ted replied, “Nice seein' you again, Bob.” Then he turned and slid behind the wheel of the Corvette. “I gotta go.” He looked up at Patty. “Forget what I said earlier. I'm sorry I bugged you. I should have never even come over. Just forget everything.”

With that, he gunned the motor and sped off down the street.

“What was that all about?” Bob asked.

“That's what I'd like to know,” Patty declared as they turned toward the house.

II

Counterfeiters

“So, what brings Ted Nichols back after all these years?” Bob asked as the trio of friends sat sipping iced tea under a canopied table on the rear patio. Sunlight glinted off the sparkling waters of the pool nearby.

“Come to think of it, that's a very good point.” Patty placed her glass on a coaster on the table. “I mean all of a sudden, after two years of no word at all from Ted, he just pops up as if he sees us all the time. There's something funny there.”

“And he even wants to give up football,” Pat added. “Can you believe that? Football used to be that guy's life. It just doesn't make any sense.”

“So what else did he have to say?” Bob asked warily.

“Not much,” Patty hedged, her gaze fixed on her glass.

“He said I was skinny.” Pat was annoyed. “You don't think I'm skinny, do you, Bob?”

Bob thought about the matter for a moment. “Well, you're a little taller than I am, and I'm a little heavier ... maybe I'm just fat.”

“Oh, c'mon, Bob,” Patty chided him. “There's not one ounce of fat on

you.”

“You still bother to notice?” Bob asked pointedly. “Even with guys like Ted around?” He grinned at her, perfect white teeth standing out against his deeply tanned skin.

She leaned forward, tousling his straw blond hair. “Be serious,” she reprimanded him. “You know, I think we may have something here,” she said as she sat back, frowning to herself. “Like maybe another mystery, though I'm sure it won't be on the scale of the last one we worked on.”

Patty was referring to the *Mystery at the Haunted Castle*, their first mystery, which had involved them in a hunt for a missing inheritance and the eventual capture of a gang of ruthless international jewel thieves. The mystery took them all the way to Paris, France, far from the small river community of Temple City, where the twins and their friends attended Temple High.

“I don't think it's a mystery at all,” Bob commented coldly. “I think he's after you again, Patty.”

“No, I'm sure he's not, Bob,” Patty said quietly but firmly. “I know Ted. I made it clear to him what kind of relationship you and I have, and he understood. He was a real gentleman about it.”

“Oh.” Bob seemed disappointed.

“No,” Patty continued, “there's something more to it than that, I have an odd feeling.” She brightened. “Well, you've come to swim—let's do it. Last one in's a rotten egg!”

Patty jumped up from her chair, threw off her beach robe, revealing a matching bathing suit, then dove into the sparkling waters of the pool. Pat and Bob followed suit, diving in together and splashing Patty as her head reappeared above the water's surface.

The trio clowned for a while in the pool then dragged themselves out,

dripping wet. They each grabbed big warm bath towels to dry themselves then wrapped them around their shoulders as they sat once more at the canopied table.

“Anyone for more iced tea?” Patty asked as she gathered up the now-empty glasses. The boys nodded enthusiastically.

As Patty disappeared through the patio doors into the family room, Pat asked, “Did Patty tell you the big news?”

“What news?” Bob was curious.

“Well,” Pat began, trying to appear modest, “we've been accepted for the Careers in Education program at State University. We leave early next week for a whole week of college life.” Pat leaned back in his chair, his hands behind his head, sighing contentedly. “Boy, I can't wait.”

“That's the beginning of summer term,” Bob noted. “My sister Susie's gonna be there.” Then he added, “So, is that Ted guy gonna be up there too?”

“As a matter of fact”—Pat confided as he leaned forward—“yes, he is. But don't worry. You can trust Patty.”

“Oh, Patty I trust,” Bob stated. “It's Ted I don't. I just hope he doesn't try anything.”

“Refreshments are here!” Patty stepped out onto the patio, balancing a large tray that held three tall frosty glasses of iced tea plus a bowl of potato chips. Under her arm, she carried a folded newspaper. She set down the tray, depositing a drink at each place, then handed the paper to Pat. “Here, budding journalist,” she told him. “The latest edition.”

“Thank you muchly, dear sister.” Pat unfolded the paper then picked up his drink and took a sip. Patty sat down on Bob's lap and brushed his hair back off his forehead.

“Missed ya,” she told him.

Bob put his arm around her. “You gonna miss me next week when you leave for college?”

“Of course,” she murmured. “But, on the other hand, it's going to be so exciting!” She smiled, closing her eyes dreamily.

“Geez,” Bob complained. “I think you forgot me already!”

“Never!” Patty put her arms around the boy's neck. “I'll think about you all week long and miss you terribly.”

“Even with all those things you'll be doing up there?” he asked. “And all those people for you to spend time with?”

“Well, you could come up and visit,” Patty suggested. “It's only a three-hour drive. If you really loved me, you'd come.”

“Is that the way you treat all your men?” he demanded as he rose to his feet, the girl in his arms. “Well, we'll just see about that.” He hoisted Patty up and carried her over to the edge of the pool.

“What are you gonna do?” she asked. “Put me down. Pat, make him stop. Pat!”

Pat glanced up from his paper, rolled his eyes, and returned to his reading.

“If that's all you think of me,” Bob continued, “I might as well just dump you.” He let go of the girl at the poolside, but Patty held on tightly to the boy, unbalancing him, and they both tumbled into the water together, making a splash big enough to soak Pat and the morning edition.

“Hey, could you two cut the clowning?” Pat reprimanded them. “You got my paper all wet.”

Patty's head and shoulders appeared at the edge of the pool as she hung onto the side, bobbing in the water. “So what's so fascinating in there, anyway?” she asked.

“Counterfeiters,” Pat remarked. “Seems a lot of counterfeit bills have been turning up all over the state in the past month or so. They have no leads to go on because it's so widespread, but they are warning local businesses to be on the lookout for the counterfeit bills.”

“Sounds interesting enough,” Patty mused. “But we've got other business to worry about for the next week or so. Besides, that's a federal case. The FBI handles that kind.”

With a few powerful strokes, Bob swam over to Patty's side. “Boy, you two are really ready for another 'case' to work on, aren't you? Why don't you cool it and enjoy your summer?” The twins did not look convinced. “What say we go down to Bernie's and get burgers and shakes?”

“You want to take Bumble Bug?” Pat folded his paper neatly and set it on the table. Bumble Bug was the Flagherty twins' yellow Volkswagen convertible. Patty gave the car its nickname after Pat had insisted on adding the black racing stripe.

“No, that's okay,” Bob said. “I'll drive.”

The trio quickly toweled themselves dry, changed into jeans and casual tops, and were soon breezing along the wide well-paved streets on the outskirts of Temple City. After a few minutes, Bob skillfully swung his car into the black-topped parking lot surrounding Bernie's Crème Pit, a favorite hangout for many of the Temple High students. The place was crowded, but Bob found one parking space that was left, squeezing into a narrow opening next to an emerald green Corvette that was parked over the line.

“I hate people that don't park in the lines,” Bob remarked as he stepped from the car.

“Isn't that Ted Nichols' car?” Patty noted as she slid out beside him.

“Figures,” Bob retorted, his tone angry. This guy was nothing but

trouble. “I guess you don't want to order at the window and go somewhere else to eat, do you?”

“Oh, let's just go in,” Patty suggested as she locked her arm in his then steered him toward the front door. Pat followed.

“You order for me,” Pat told them. “I'll find us a table.” Looking around the crowded, noisy room, Pat tried to spot an empty table. Everybody seemed to be there today, even a couple of police officers from the local precinct who must be out on their lunch break, he supposed. No empty tables, but there was one booth where a boy sat by himself.

“Ted!” Pat called as he moved among the tables toward the boy in the booth. “What a coincidence seeing you here.” He slid into the booth opposite the husky football player. “You get all your errands run?”

“Oh, hi, Pat,” Ted sat, idly stirring a half-finished milkshake, an untouched hamburger in front of him. “What errands?” He looked up then, a sheepish half-smile on his face. “Oh, yeah,” he murmured. “Yeah, I got everything done.”

“Mind if we sit down too?” Bob asked as he and Patty reached the table. “The waitress is bringing our order.” Neither Pat nor Ted made any effort to move. Bob looked at Patty then quickly slid into the booth next to Ted. Obliging, Ted moved his food over and slid into the corner of the seat. Patty sat next to her brother.

“So,” Patty began after a long awkward pause, “this is quite a coincidence. We don't see you for years, Ted, then all of a sudden, it's twice in one day.”

“Fate, I'd call it,” Ted mumbled into his milkshake.

“What'd you say?” Bob asked.

“Nuthin’,” was the sullen reply.

“Ah, here's our order,” Pat declared as a blonde-haired waitress brought the tray over to the table and began handing out plates with the sandwiches on them.

“Thanks, Betty,” Pat told the girl as she handed him a chocolate milkshake.

Betty set Bob's vanilla shake in front of him and glanced over at Ted. She nearly dropped her tray in surprise.

“You're Ted Nichols, aren't you?” she asked.

“Yeah,” he replied, attempting modesty.

“You were state champion at Temple High a few years ago,” she added. “And I've seen you play at State. Ever since you've been there, I've gotten season tickets for the home games. I'll bet I'm your biggest fan. Will you give me your autograph?” She snatched up Bob's unused napkin and handed it to Ted along with the pen she carried for orders.

Ted took the items from the girl then scribbled a brief note on the napkin. “Here you go,” he finally said as he finished. “And I'd like to pay my bill now.” He handed her the white slip from the table then pulled two crisp new twenty-dollar bills from his wallet. “While you're at it,” he added, beaming, “use this to pay their bill and keep five bucks for yourself too.”

“Gee, thanks,” Betty exclaimed as she headed for the cash register.

“Wait!” Bob demanded as he started to rise. Patty's hand on his stopped him.

“It's okay, Bob,” she soothed. “And thanks, Ted. We really appreciate that.”

“The least I could do.” He feigned modesty.

“Now, where'd you say you'd be staying up at State for summer term?” Patty suddenly asked.

The question surprised both Ted and Bob. “I gotta run,” Ted told them. “Could you—?” He indicated Bob should move.

Bob said nothing as he stood. Ted slid out of the seat but not before Patty took one of his hands in hers. “Wait, Ted,” she commanded quietly. “Why don't you tell us what's wrong?”

Ted pulled his hand away from her and stood. “I'd really rather not get into it here, Patty.” His tone was testy. “I told you before it was a bad idea—me involving you in my situation. Now just drop it.” With that, he turned and strode off toward the cash register.

“Well, how do you like that?” Bob said as he resumed his seat.

“And you think there's nothing wrong,” Patty chided him. “I think we've got a genuine mystery by the tail. I just wish I knew what it was all about.”

“We may find out sooner than you'd like,” Pat remarked as he nodded in the direction of the scene at the other side of the room. Ted stood at the cash register, arguing loudly with the waitress named Betty, who appeared quite distraught. “Let's go check this one out.”

The trio stepped over to where the others were arguing. Just as they reached them, an older man Pat recognized as Bernie, the owner of the restaurant, hurried over to the waitress, frantically waving two \$20 bills. The two police officers Pat had noticed earlier followed behind him.

“I demand to know why I can't have my change,” they heard Ted shout as Bernie and the officers moved in.

The policeman with red hair and freckles stepped in front of Ted. “I'll tell you why,” he told the surprised boy. “Because you're under arrest. Those bills you handed the waitress were counterfeit!”