# Betrayal

## Sasha Blake

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Extract

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# LOS ANGELES, 1996

## *Emily*

It was 10.30 a.m. and Emily lay naked on the lilo, using her mother's favourite suede coat as a towel, and let the gentle breeze waft her around the infinity pool. In one hand she held a pint glass of chilled Baileys. Her first to-do on arrival at the mansion had been to order Quintin to freeze three ice-cube trays of her favourite drink, because there was nothing worse than a warm Baileys or a dilute Baileys. She drew on her fifth Silk Cut Light of the day, and gazed at the forever-blue sky of LA.

Everything: perfect.

She liked the world upside down, especially when it was so prettily fringed by those pink and red flowers that smothered any suggestion of ugliness – wall, pole, fence and, possibly, person – in the Hollywood Hills. She liked that there were invisible teams slaving night and day to keep all she saw gorgeous. She liked the quiet. The only noise was the buzz of helicopters, either the paparazzi harassing stars or privately owned by the stars themselves. She liked that it was summer and that Mummy had complied with the annual lie that Emily 'work' as an intern at the Beverly Grand.

It was lucky that Mummy adored Emily more in theory than in person, and seized on any chance to put oceans between them. Mummy wasn't interested in people under eighteen. By

the time Emily was old enough to come to her attention, it would be too late.

To Mummy, this was just another one of Emily's LA jaunts, where she could drink and smoke and do coke and trash the 26,000-square-foot mansion off Mulholland, while pretending to work at her father's hotel. As long as Mummy didn't *witness* a felony and wasn't forced to make a show of responsible parenting, as long as someone was paid to delete all evidence of wrongdoing, Mummy was just grateful to have a fourteen-year-old with the wit to entertain herself.

It was annoying to be underestimated, but she wouldn't be for much longer. Meantime, her parents' lack of interest was useful. The pinnacle of her life plan – to seduce her best friend, Timmy – would be accomplished that day without interference.

Timothy Rupert Peregrine Giles, heir to the Fifteenth Earl of Fortelyne, was seventeen and Gordonstoun was shaping him up nicely for a lifelong stay in the warm embrace of the Establishment. He was charming, witty, able to acquit himself admirably in any social situation; he was a good rower, a fine rugby player, and – having been removed from his mother at seven and only briefly reunited with her after puberty – he knew nothing about women.

Tim had no idea that if a girl recommended Lanikai Beach in Hawaii for the best surfing – several times, over several months, in passing, until he became convinced that the idea was *his* – that she might have an ulterior motive. He was one of those nice but frustrating guys, blind to who was a saint and who was a bitch, because he imagined that wicked must show on a girl's face.

However, his naivety and good nature were great assets to Emily. She'd waited until he booked Hawaii, and then she'd said, 'I'll be in LA around then. Come for the weekend. I'll send the jet.'

She knew that while a seventeen-year-old boy could (bizarrely) resist *her*, he couldn't resist 'the jet'.

Tim's family had pots of money but, to Emily's disdain, they had no idea how to spend it. That crappy old Land-Rover they bumped about in! Those hideous saggy green cords his mother Pat – a *countess*! – was always tramping around in! If they flew, they flew *commercial*! All that dreary centuries-old furniture! And their parties! Never happy unless a great big draughty marquee was involved; only satisfied if their guests were squelching up to their waists in mud; curiously cavalier about the quality and quantity of the food.

So, the private jet was winging its way to Hawaii and the Maserati would collect him at the airstrip. As far as he knew, he was staying for the 'weekend', a concept familiar to him, as most posh people she knew spent every weekend filling their castles with braying guests, who were expected to kill birds and bunnies, take endless walks, play charades and take part in any number of life-sapping activities from dawn to dusk. God forbid they had a quiet couple of days lolling around to music and watching the box.

*This* weekend – *her* LA house party weekend – would be different. LA was made for parties, unlike England. In England, throwing a party was an imposition: against you stood the weather, the traffic and your guests' prior commitment to staying home and sniping about next door.

Emily smiled to herself. She'd found her own event planners, people who were clued in to *now*. They'd sorted the valet parking and the street-use permit. They'd notified the neighbours, with enormous bouquets – she didn't want the LAPD wading in. They'd organized the bartenders, security guards, caterers, decorators, insurance, bonded storage for the art and antiques – like she cared, but *they* did – and they'd even offered to supply a couple of dozen fashion models paid to chuck themselves naked into the pool at midnight.

Like, talk about your worst *nightmare*! But the limo service into the Hills was a good idea, as most of her guests couldn't drive. The party would set Mummy back nine hundred

thousand pounds, plus another ton when Emily flew out all her mates from London. She was embarrassed at having them slum it in Virgin Upper Class (she hated to appear budget) but there was no way that they'd all fit in the family jet. Anyway, it was reserved for Timmy and, short of appropriating Air Force One, there was no alternative.

She'd chosen the guest list with care. Her own crowd was pretty cool, and Leonardo was invited, and Johnny – she prayed he wouldn't drag along his girlfriend. It was a great bore that the bar had to be officially virgin, but she didn't want Quintin busted for serving liquor to minors. Anyway, there was a secret alcohol den for the chosen few and, in *hommage* to Johnny, she'd ordered the Jacuzzi to be filled with vintage champagne. She had to invite *some* A-list females, so she'd chosen Alicia and the Ricci girl – no one too distracting.

The DJs, Sasha and John Digweed – oh my God, their gigs were *so* cool! She *loved* how trance let you *be*, and it made her *so* horny. They were going to blow everyone away. And *she* was going to blow Timmy away.

'Quintin!'

'It's eleven, Emily, a selection of drop-dead outfits await your inspection.'

She'd picked them out a week ago, leafing quickly through *Vogue*: 'Get me that, and that, and that.'

'Thanks, Quintin!'

She loved Quintin. She wondered if his mother had just *known* he was gay, setting eyes on him. It was quite cool to have gay friends. Well, to be acquainted with an actual gay person. Officially, it was 'his' party, and he'd done everything in his power to ensure its success. He knew the best beauticians; her eyebrows and bikini line were immaculate, and the hot-stone massage – 'You'll feel like you've just had sex, darling,' he'd said, then clapped a hand over his mouth. She'd smiled; she loved that he thought of her as an adult.

She'd been body-brushed and seaweed-wrapped and Pilates-stretched to within an inch of her life. She disliked the

underground gym – she felt it gave the house a whiff of the Hyatt – but she'd done ten miles on the running machine. Her teeth were virgin white, and her tan was café crème (poor Mummy thought that 'sexy' was to fry yourself the colour of a hot dog). She'd gone for an early hike up Runyon every morning, *and* she could now swim the entire length of the pool underwater.

Emily was ready to bet that no one in the history of the world had prepared quite so thoroughly for a blow job.

She drained the last of the Baileys, swam to the side and jogged up the steps. The Mexican gardener fought against nature to look the other way. 'Feast your eyes,' she cried as she skipped past.

Quintin had laid out the clothes on her bed. Amid the tiny gorgeous scraps of material passing for dresses was a black mini kimono from Galliano. Perhaps she could wear it with the Wonderbra, black fishnet stockings, suspenders and red and black lace knickers from Topshop? And you couldn't beat black patent Prada heels. To hell with heroin chic – she preferred prostitute chic. Seventeen-year-old boys weren't complex, so why confuse them?

Here was the plan. She'd have the driver take the Merc and grab her a Fatburger with chilli cheese fries. She'd eat, doze and watch MTV while they tarted up the house. Quintin could deal with questions and Timmy wasn't due till eight. Bang on four, she'd shower, do her hair and make-up. The air con would have to be polar – happily, Mummy wasn't here to scream, 'Shut the fucking *doors*!' Mummy loved a professional make-up artist, although they invariably made her look like a drag artist. No way was one of those clowns going *near* Emily's face!

She ate, slept, woke, looked in the mirror; FUCK, her eyelids were PUFFY. Puffy as HELL.

'Quintin! Quintin, Oh my God, come now, help!'

To his great credit, Quintin staggered into her bedroom wielding a seventeenth-century stone Buddha.

An emergency application of ice cubes and cucumber limited the damage, 'and it's imperative that you remain vertical from this moment on, and whatever you do, don't cry.' By six o clock she felt sufficiently calm to dress to *The Immaculate Collection*. She flossed, brushed, blinked through the sting of the mint mouthwash. Then she had a fag. Sod it, that was what gum was for.

'Very *Pretty Woman*,' murmured Quintin when she did a twirl.

Stupidly, she felt nervous. Tim hadn't called – did he have the house number? He had her mobile, but reception was shit in the Hills. Oh, these boys, they never called – they just arrived. She scurried back to her bedroom, quick snort; *now* she felt good. She poured herself another Baileys, then wandered to the upper deck, threw herself on a sun lounger and gazed through Chanel shades at the amazing sprawl of the San Fernando Valley and the San Gabriel Mountains, almost purple on the dimming horizon. The ocean was a thin serene line. It was hard to stay still, so she jumped up, lit a fag, went to say hi to Sasha and John.

'I enjoy your work,' she said coolly, tossing her hair.

John winked at her and said, 'Thanks, little girl.'

He was cute in a rough sort of way, like a builder. She couldn't decide whether to be offended or flattered, so she purred, 'See you later,' and sashayed off.

The house looked wild. They'd set up tacky-but-cool fluorescent palm-tree lights at the front gates, and the word *Believe* in huge curly white script was projected to the bottom of the pool. Later, the pool would become a monster bubble bath (the bubbles, colour of your choice, were guaranteed to vanish, leaving no trace, by dawn). They'd managed – how, in the dusk, she had no idea – to refract light into its composite colours; as a result, the entire house was a mass of rainbows. The pagoda had been cleared of furniture and was now an open-air dance floor. The lemon, fig, peach and grapefruit trees were hung with crystals, all sparkling,

amid the fruit. And there were white flowers everywhere.

Oh, and they'd turned the tennis court into an ice rink.

She peered into the open-air Jacuzzi, then knelt, like a cat before a saucer of cream, and lapped at it. Fucking A, man! If you hadn't drunk Krug from a Jacuzzi, you hadn't *lived*. Emily sat up, tilted her head and laughed aloud. Although . . .

'Quintin!'

'My lady?'

'Please bring ten bottles of crème de cassis.'

She emptied them into the Jacuzzi, giggling, and watched as it turned a hot pink. *This* was the spot, oh my God! And don't think she wouldn't turf out Johnny to get close and personal with Tim. Although, it was kind of gross. She didn't mind immersing herself in Depp's bodily fluids, but *the girlfriend's*? No *way*.

The Jacuzzi needed to be roped off with some of that yellow police-crime-scene-do-not-cross tape. She asked Quintin to organize it, and went to check out the bar. Virgin everything. Americans were so bloody terrified of booze that it was illegal to drink until you were *twenty-one*, but if you wanted a gun licence: you're *so* welcome! Her guests would get high on drugs instead.

The food was lush: sushi from Katsu-ya – their tempura prawns were to die for; fish and chips from Ford's – *love* that Oo-ee Sauce, but, sigh, no garlic *tonight*; chocolate fountains; candy-floss stalls; milkshakes from Fosselman's – unbeatable, especially the cookies and cream; and, of course, cupcakes from Dainties. She'd have to resist, she had more important business and – oh my *God*, the limos were arriving. She screamed with joy to see her girls, who screamed back. Her parties always merited a good scream. The British guys walked around, hands in pockets, trying not to look impressed. The American guys were all, like, 'Man, this is *awesome*!' There was lots of air kissing, and the music was at full blast. It was going to be a *bad* night.

But where was Tim?

Leonardo showed, with an entourage of fifteen. He was cute, not as squat as on-screen, but spent a tedious amount of time huddled in a remote scrum, or fiddling with his mobile. She'd shrugged prettily and said, 'Guess you should find a party downtown.'

Tram lines improved her mood, and she had to test a glass of Jacuzzi booze to make sure it was drinkable, and those tempura prawns, what an addiction! Hey, and there was her favourite boy, Barney: middle posh, cheerfully sleazy, loyal as a red setter, *always* randy (he'd tried it on with her mother and she really, *really* didn't want to know how far he'd got). Barney insisted she try the chocolate fountain. Instead of dipping in a pink marshmallow, he dipped in his cock.

She shrieked with laughter. 'Fuck *off*, Barney, I don't know where it's been – or rather I do!'

But, suddenly, more than anything, she wanted to suck him off. Girls like her didn't send jets for just anyone. How *dare* Tim reject her. She'd spent months of preparation, not to mention nine hundred thousand quid on his blow job!

Fine. Well. She'd give it to someone else, someone who *deserved* it. She turned to Barney with her best pout, and—

'Hi there, Em. Cool party.'

She swung around, eyes glittering, and Barney faded tactfully into the shadows.

'Tim.' She *had* to laugh. 'Tim, you must be *boiling*!' He was wearing black faded jeans, cowboy boots, a pink shirt under a white wool tank top, and a great red pashmina with gold thread wrapped around his neck. 'This is LA, Tim, not Edinburgh.' She grinned and walked around him, unravelling the pashmina. 'You need to show me some skin.'

'I don't know,' he said. 'There appears to be a skating rink.'

'Well, it is Hollywood. Someone's got to break a leg.' *Shit*. She must be nervous. That joke *sucked*.

She waved over Quintin, who was booze marshal, and pressed an illicit Jack 'n' Coke into Tim's hand. 'By

the way,' he said. 'Thanks awfully for the ride. It rocked.'

'Do you mean there was turbulence?' she teased. 'Because I simply don't allow it.'

He blushed, letting his hair fall over his eyes. 'Only in my heart.'

She felt her heart crinkle like a tissue. Poor baby, he was so inept. 'Oh, Tim,' she said, and stroked his hair. 'You are just . . . beautiful.' She took his hand. 'Come with me. I have something to show you.'

They crept down to the lower deck, where the Jacuzzi was cordoned off. The whole of downtown LA spread below them like a magic carpet.

'Nice view,' she said.

'I prefer this one,' he replied, gazing into her eyes. Oh Jesus. On no account must she laugh.

Somehow, Quintin had found a sign that read 'DANGER OF DEATH' above an illustration of a prone stick figure, a lightning bolt pointing at his neck. Em booted it to one side. Then, slinkily, she sat on the ground, and said, 'I don't want to get my shoes wet.'

Slowly, Tim knelt, like a knight before his queen, and slipped off her shoes. It was OK – she'd deodorized her feet to hell. He was breathing hard. She necked her Kir Royale; she tipped her head back too fast and her vision swam. She felt odd, wired, but not in a good way. Fried prawns and white powder didn't go – remember *that* for next time. She was about to take off Tim's shoes, when she saw that he'd whipped off *all* his clothes, except for his boxer shorts.

He grinned. 'Let's Jacuzzi.'

She stood up and, silently, he pulled at her obi-style sash. The black mini kimono fell open, and she shrugged it off. Tim's mouth actually fell open at the sight of her in her tiny knickers, stockings and Wonderbra. He pulled her on to his lap, and their lips met in a hard clash. To her surprise he took the lead.

'You kiss good,' she gasped, and he replied, 'I fuck better.'

His dick pressed hard into her stomach, and she felt a lurch of desire. 'Oh, baby,' she sighed, wrapping her legs around him. 'I'm just a girl.'

She should really go down on him *now* . . . now would be a good time, but she had to let her stomach settle. She leant back as he leant forward, chasing the kiss, and, screaming, they toppled into the Jacuzzi.

'My hair,' she shrieked, and got a mouthful of Kir Royale.

'Far *out*!' gargled Tim, surfacing, and then he pulled her under. But she couldn't kiss for laughing, and then got Krug up her nose. She surfaced, spluttering, and so did he. Her eyes stung, but she was so wasted she couldn't stop laughing, and nor could he.

'Stop laughing,' she gasped as he grazed his lips to her nipples. *Zing!* Every sensation was magnified and it wasn't entirely pleasant. 'I'm going to . . .' It was quite hard to focus. She wasn't sure she could hold her breath that long – she tried a sexy smoulder. 'I'm going to give you the chew of your life.'

He shouted with laughter. 'Emily, Emily,' he muttered, as his mouth found hers. 'You dirty girl.'

He stood up and she pulled off his boxers. Oh my. Basically, in the cold light of day, these things weren't the *prettiest*. In fact, a penis was, like, gross. But right now, she was *so* in the mood, and to her, it looked good enough to eat. She licked and sucked, and he shuddered and groaned and thrust. It was fine, except when he thrust. When it hit the back of her throat it made her stomach heave. But she writhed, and sighed, and gave him the coy looks for about a thousand years, and he rolled his eyes, half comatose with bliss, but showed no sign of approaching the finish line. Bloody hell, hurry *up*, she wasn't exactly having fun here. She should really do the deep throat thing now, the grand finale, and he would never *look* at another girl. He would dream of marriage – he was an old-fashioned boy, he'd be digging through his mother's jewellery box, ferreting out the

great-grandmother's engagement ring in no time. The thought spurred her on and she could feel – thank God, her lips were totally numb – it was near the end. 'Yes, I'm going to come.' She squeezed her eyes shut tight as he jerked violently. Come on, Em, keep going, think of castles. God, she felt rough. Her head ached, as if it was being crushed, and he was pushing her hard, down and – 'OH YES!' Oh *no* – rearing back in horror, she puked a great stinking fountain of pink champagne and half-digested fried prawns all over him.

## LONDON, A YEAR EARLIER, 1995

### *Claudia*

'One large tea, please. Can you put two teabags in there, please? And cold milk – it must be cold, *not* hot – just to the colour of a St-Tropez tan. Or, um, pine wood! A caramel slice – yes, the exact colour of a caramel slice. *Please* don't put too much milk in there, it mustn't taste milky. And one latte, medium-sized, can you put extra cinnamon on the top, please? Not too much froth, the froth mustn't exceed one-third of the cup. And the milk must be semi-skimmed. Oh, sorry, I forgot to say, the milk for the tea must be full fat. Yes. And a triple espresso, with an extra two inches of hot water. And one slice of peanut butter on toast – brown toast, not *too* well done, and absolutely *no* butter. Smooth peanut butter – on no account crunchy. Sorry. A fried-egg sandwich, still runny yolk, with butter, *not* margarine, on white bread – bread, not toast. Could you – I'm so sorry about this – cut off the crusts? Thank you! And, finally, you'll be pleased to hear, a low-fat blueberry muffin. Oh God. Is there anywhere else, do you know? Oh, really? Are you sure? She won't be able to tell? I'll risk it! Well, thank you, *thank you*.'

It was hard work, being a journalist.

Claudia pressed the button for the twenty-seventh floor and tried not to drop three hot drinks on the red carpet. She also tried not to think of JR wreaking terrible dog vengeance in her flat.

According to Upstairs – who'd given the information with remarkably gentle reproach – JR had howled at teeth-gritting pitch for seven hours straight every day this week. For a senior citizen, he was remarkably spry. She suspected that he'd also pissed in her black Prada bag. She'd left it on the floor by mistake and every time she passed it, she got a *whiff*. She'd have to organize a dog-sitter, one who could fend off bites. JR knew who was leader of the pack, and it wasn't Claudia. He slept *in* – not *on* – her bed, his long haughty snout resting on her cream pillow. His breath was foul, he snored, and he had fleas.

She suspected her grandmother was looking down and laughing.

Still, Claudia was happy. She was twenty years old and she was *free*.

She had a home of her own, a tiny, one-bedroom flat, allegedly in 'Highgate' but nearer to the A1, which mostly belonged to the bank. Ruth had left her no money – everything had gone to the RSPCA – and she'd choke before she took a penny from her father.

When Claudia brushed her teeth, she could hear the *ping!* as her upstairs neighbour switched on his bathroom light. At night, in bed, she could hear him cough (or worse). He had a cheap sports car and a second wife, and he was always smiling. The people on the ground floor had three little boys, one in a wheelchair – MD, she thought – and the mother was always smiling, too.

It was a happy house, not exactly the high life.

Truth was, people expected her to be loaded because of Dad, even since his disgrace – which was not that he'd been ruined by the Lloyd's crash, but that he *hadn't*. He'd lost millions but he'd managed to keep *enough*. The lawsuit had

failed to prove that Jack had knowingly transferred funds and properties; he'd won his case but lost his reputation. *The Times*'s Financial Editor had written, 'Everyone is bankrupt, but some are more bankrupt than others,' and a letter signed by forty destitute Names had been printed the next day; 'Some are more corrupt than others.' She'd felt sick reading it, but she agreed.

Jack hadn't always been like this. Once, he'd been a good man.

Claudia's colleagues had discovered who she was, despite the fact that she'd taken Ruth's last name – Mayer – and they didn't like her for it. She spent her day fetching dry cleaning and precisely ordered snacks, endlessly yo-yoing in the silver lifts of Canary Wharf's Tower, and trying to set up exclusives with reclusive, press-hating stars for the writers. And she knew that when she wasn't looking, Linda, the frumpy secretary, mimicked her walk.

She didn't care. She had a *job*, unconnected to the family, and she had her pen friend Lucy to thank for it.

It had been Lucy who'd suggested that Claudia call the deputy editor of *UK Sunday*, Martin Freshwater. 'My stepdad works on the publishing side,' she'd written, 'although *don't* mention his name. I know that Martin is looking for people.'

Lucy had even written down Martin's direct line. It was incredibly kind of her. Odd that when Claudia called, Martin said he *wasn't* looking. But he'd said he liked the sound of her voice, and she was welcome to come in for a week on work experience.

She'd been so excited that she'd wanted to ring Lucy and hear her voice – they'd never even spoken on the phone. But Lucy's response had been disappointing. Lucy's stepfather was moving the family abroad: a business opportunity in South Africa. Lucy was to join the family firm and train as an accountant. She'd promised to send her new address in Cape Town but never had. Claudia guessed that it was to do with the stepfather. She tried not to be hurt.

She succeeded.

This had nothing to do with inner strength and everything to do with Martin Freshwater.

Martin Freshwater was unfairly gorgeous. He had blue-green eyes and a hint of stubble. He had sharp cheekbones and blond floppy hair with a touch of grey. He typed like a demon, using two fingers. Usually, a lit cigarette rested between his ring finger (unadorned) and his middle finger as he tapped away. He was a brilliant editor, so . . . *masterful* and his shirts were a little crumpled, suggesting he needed a woman to – oh God, shut *up*! No, what she meant was, Martin Freshwater needed a woman who could recommend a good dry cleaner.

Martin Freshwater was the reason she was eating again.

According to her shrink, who was a nice person but made her feel mad, an eating disorder was a form of depression. She had all this anger, but she didn't dare show it, so it had festered inside.

She supposed the shrink was right. At first it had been a way of snatching back some control from her parents. But bulimia was such an ugly way of trying to be beautiful. It made you hate yourself even more than you did when you were fat. After four years of it, she wanted to be *normal*.

She'd tried. It was the same as other people quitting smoking. You did it a million times but then you suffered one miserable day, no, *two* miserable days, and you craved the delicious comfort of a nice poisonous lung-clagging fag. And then you thought, Sod it, bought a pack, smoked the lot.

She wanted to love herself but she needed *verification* from a respected source. There were a few boys who 'liked' her. But she didn't like them, and not just because of their two-ply personalities, or designs on her father's money. She'd know, after one minute, that these boys didn't *get* her. To them she was no more than a slot machine: good to stick something in, or get money out of.

Martin Freshwater liked Claudia for *herself*. He had given

her the strength to kick her habit. She wasn't going to be eating pastry anytime soon, but she was doing all right. He wasn't a boy, he was a man. He was thirty-seven. Martin Freshwater made Claudia feel happy. There was a connection there: when she looked into his eyes, there was *recognition*. They were kindred souls. Her attraction to him was primal, something not experienced before, and she felt sure – the feeling was so strong – that he felt the same way.

They hadn't even kissed.

But they were going to.

She placed his triple espresso on his desk. He glanced up. Everyone was crowded around the picture desk, squinting over the light box, no doubt to cackle over stills of young female celebrities as yet un-airbrushed and revealing some happy human flaw such as facial hair.

'Claudia, busy tonight?'

She took a breath. 'Well, er, I need to take my dog out . . . a quick walk . . . he has to go to the toilet . . .' *Yes, mention 'toilet'.* 'But otherwise . . .'

'I'm meeting Meg Ryan's PR at the Connaught. Come along. See how it works. Might have to run a puff piece on some nobody before we get Meg.'

'Oh, yes. That would be great.'

'Good. See you there. Eight thirty.'

She was stupidly happy. She left the office dot on five thirty, sped home and spent two hours beautifying. JR (who had ripped up three cushions) got the briefest toilet break of his life. When she put down his freshly made pasta and chicken – JR famously had a weak stomach which you ignored at your peril – he turned coldly away from the bowl.

'JR, I *beg* you!'

He sat down with a thump on the carpet, and rested his head on his paws. He was pining for Ruth. She crouched beside him and stroked his silky head. 'I'm sorry, Mr.'

She glanced covertly at her watch. Time to go. She looked hopefully at JR's tail – not a twitch. Ah, crap.