



◆ THE EYES OF ◆
Montezuma

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Storylines 2

• THE EYES OF • MONTEZUMA

1 The American girl

Nick Harman stood at the back of the ship and watched England slowly disappear. 'That was a really wonderful holiday,' he said quietly.

His wife, Clare, smiled. 'Two weeks of rain in Cornwall and you thought it was wonderful?!'

Nick put an arm round her and laughed. 'Well, OK, the weather was bad, but you can't have an English August without rain.' He looked at his watch. 'When do we get to Santander?'

'Not until six o'clock this evening,' answered Clare. 'Then it's another four hours in the car to Madrid. It's going to be a long day.'

Nick looked down at the white water below them. 'It's also the last day of our holiday,' he said.

Suddenly he felt Clare's hand on his arm. 'Look,' she said and pointed to an old man on the other side of the ship. He was sitting in a red chair and reading a Spanish newspaper.

'What is it?' asked Nick.

'The Countess of Montalban has died,' replied Clare. 'It's on the front page of that man's newspaper. Isn't her grandson, Jose Duero, one of your students?'

Just then the old man stood up and put the newspaper under his arm. Quickly Nick walked across to him.

'Excuse me,' he said in Spanish. 'Could I borrow your newspaper for a few minutes?'

The man smiled. 'Yes, you can keep it, young man. But are you sure you want it? It's ten days old.'

'Yes, I'm sure,' said Nick. 'Thanks.'

Five minutes later Nick and Clare were sitting in one of the ship's lounges. There were two cups of coffee and the Spanish newspaper on the table in front of them.

'She was ninety-four,' said Clare.

'Yes,' replied Nick. 'She was also one of the richest women in Spain. Jose told me once about a pair of her earrings. What did he call them? Oh yes - the Eyes of Montezuma - that was it.'

'The Eyes of Montezuma,' repeated Clare softly.

Nick looked up from the newspaper. 'Hmm, the two biggest diamonds in Spain. They came from Mexico about two hundred years ago and have been in the family since then.' He turned the page. 'Well, until now,' he continued quietly. 'It says here 'The Countess has given her famous earrings, the Eyes of Montezuma, to the Prado Museum in Madrid.' 'Look . . . there's a photo.'

Clare put down her coffee cup and looked. In a glass case there were two very beautiful diamonds. It was only a black and white photo, but the diamonds shone like cold, white fires.



'The Eyes of Montezuma,' she repeated slowly. 'What a wonderful name.'

'Excuse me, could I sit at your table? All the others are full.'

Nick and Clare both looked up. There in front of them was a girl of eighteen or nineteen. She was pretty with short, dark hair and bright eyes.

'Yes ... please do,' said Clare, and took her bag off the chair beside her.

'Thanks,' said the girl. She put a glass of milk on the table and sat down. 'Hi, I'm Shelley ... Shelley Marn.' Her voice was American and she was wearing a T-shirt with a picture of James Dean on the front.

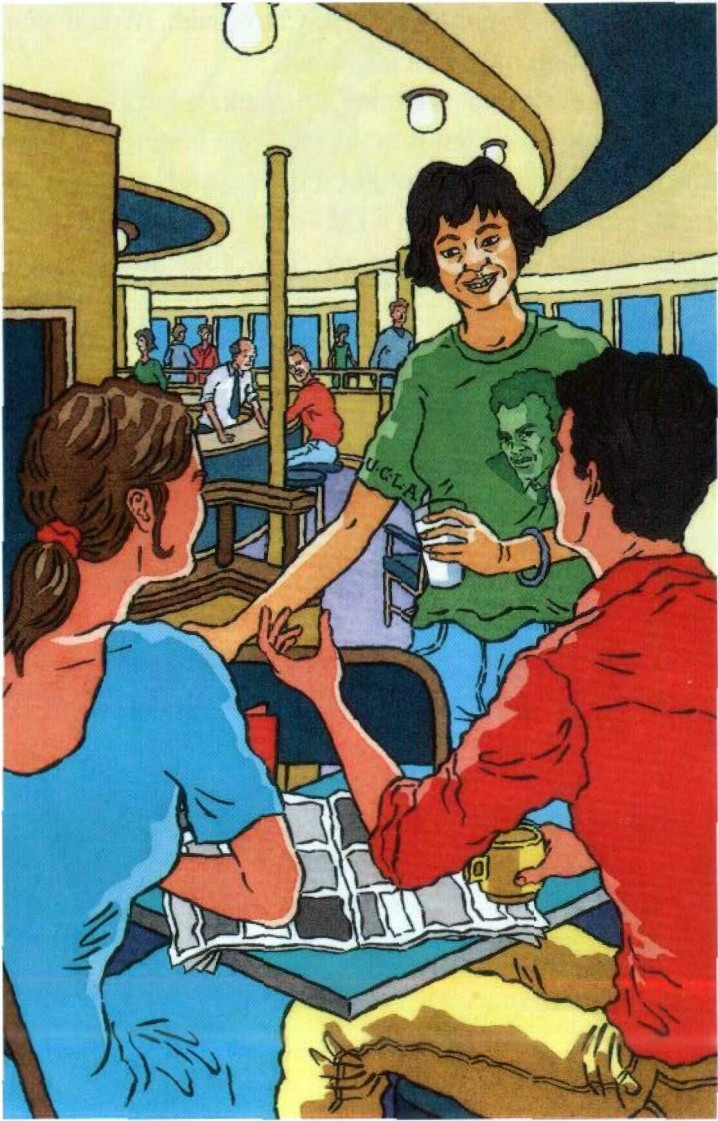
'Hello,' said Nick. 'I'm Nick Harman and this is my wife, Clare.'

The girl smiled at both of them, then pointed at the newspaper on the table. 'Please, don't let me ...'

'No, that's OK, we've finished,' said Clare.

The three travellers began talking. First, Nick and Clare told Shelley about their home in Madrid and their jobs. 'Nick's an English teacher and I work in a hospital,' said Clare. 'We've lived in Spain for almost two years now.'

Then Shelley told them about her life in the United States. She was a student at the University of California and lived in Los Angeles. 'This is my first time in Europe without my parents,' she said with a small smile. 'My family has friends in Zaragoza and I'm going to stay with them for a month.'



After about twenty minutes, Clare said, 'Would you like to stay and have lunch with us?'

'OK,' Shelley said. 'Thanks . . . thanks a lot. But first I must get my bag. I left it in the car.' She laughed. 'I have this little yellow Fiat. I bought it in England. And do you know why I chose it? I'm STM - Shelley Theresa Marn - and the letters on the car are STM, too!' She laughed again and stood up. 'Two minutes, OK?' Then she turned and walked out of the lounge.

But Shelley Marn didn't come back after two minutes, or ten, or twenty. Nick and Clare waited, but in the end they had lunch without her.

'I don't understand it,' said Nick when they left the restaurant.

'Neither do I,' replied Clare. 'She was so friendly.'

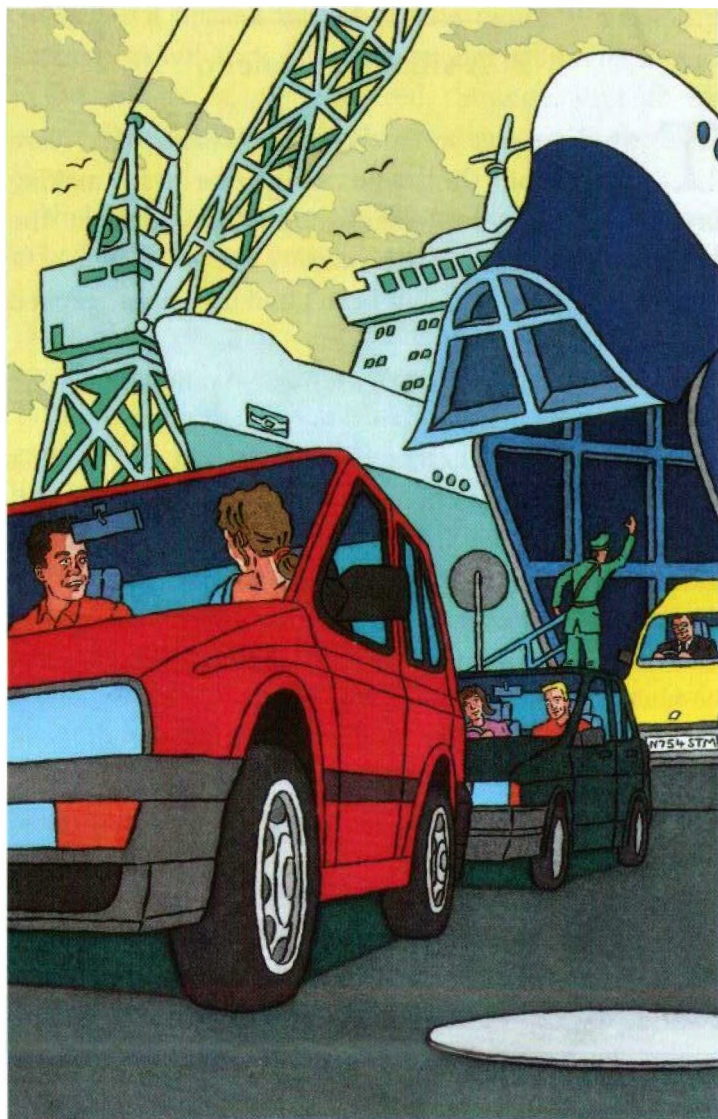
Several hours later they arrived at Santander in the north of Spain. It was early in the evening, but still very hot. In their car, the Harmans were waiting to leave the ship and begin the road journey to Madrid.

Suddenly Nick said, 'That's strange.'

'What's strange?' replied Clare.

'That Fiat,' Nick answered. 'The yellow one, two cars behind us. Didn't Shelley say her car was a yellow Fiat?'

Clare turned and looked. 'N754 STM,' she said quietly. 'It *is* her car.' Then she noticed the driver. It wasn't Shelley Marn. It was a big, dark-haired man wearing sunglasses.



2 A villa near Toledo

Two days later in the Harmans' Madrid flat, Clare turned on the radio while she was making breakfast. 'Hurry up!' she shouted to Nick in the bedroom. 'We're going to be late.'

'OK, OK, I know ... but I can't find my shoes,' replied Nick's voice.

Clare smiled. 'There's always something,' she thought.

Just then the radio news began. At first Clare didn't listen very carefully, but suddenly ...

'Last night two of Spain's most famous and expensive diamonds disappeared from the Prado Museum. The diamonds - the Eyes of Montezuma - were in a special glass case on the museum's second floor. Police have begun...'

Nick walked into the kitchen with a pair of shoes in one hand. 'I've found them,' he said. Then he saw Clare's face and stopped. She was pointing at the radio. 'What is it?' he asked.

'Someone's stolen the Eyes of Montezuma,' Clare replied quietly. 'Listen.'

'... only ten days ago,' the voice on the radio continued. 'Before that they were in the Montalban family for two hundred years. And now the sports news ...'

Clare got up and turned off the radio. 'When did it happen?' asked Nick. He sat down and put on his shoes.

'Last night,' Clare answered. 'Strange, isn't it? We were talking about them only two days ago on the ship. Now...'

Nick looked at his watch. 'Oh no, we really *are* going to be late. Come on, you can tell me the story in the car.'

The Countess of Montalban's eighteen-year-old grandson, Jose Duero, was one of Nick's students that morning. After the lesson Nick said, 'I heard about your grandmother's diamonds, Jose. It's terrible. Have you had any news?'

Jose looked at his hands sadly. 'No, not a word, Mr Harman,' he said. 'They've gone, and we're never going to see them again ... I'm sure of it.' He lifted his face and looked at Nick. 'You know,' he continued, 'my grandmother really loved the Eyes of Montezuma. Only a month ago she told me, "One day I want to give them to the people of Spain".' He stopped for a second and looked down again. 'That was the last time I saw her alive.'

Later that afternoon Nick had to give a lesson outside Madrid. On the way back he stopped because he needed some petrol. While he was waiting to pay, a man came out of the supermarket across the street. He was tall, fat and had dark hair. 'Where have I seen him before?' thought Nick. A student? No. Did he work at

the hospital with Clare? No. At that moment the man looked up at the sky, then put on a pair of sunglasses. Suddenly Nick remembered. 'You were the one behind the wheel of Shelley Marn's car!' he thought. Yes, he was sure of it. Quickly he paid and walked outside.

Just then a blue Renault stopped a few metres in front of the dark-haired stranger. The door opened and a woman's voice called, in English, 'Don't just stand there, you fool. Let's go.' The car began to move, and then Nick saw something. On the back seat there was a bag with the letters U.C.L.A. on the side. The University of California in Los Angeles ... Shelley's university.

'I don't like this,' thought Nick. 'I don't like this at all.' He began to walk towards a telephone box, but stopped. No, there wasn't time to call the police. He turned, ran back to his car and started the engine. There was only one answer. He had to follow the blue Renault.

Nick's journey ended one hour later on a quiet country road near Toledo. The blue Renault stopped in front of a pair of heavy metal gates. There was a high wall on both sides of them, and a sign on the gates said 'KEEP OUT. Quickly Nick stopped, too, and turned off his engine. He was two hundred metres behind the other car, but he could see everything. After a few seconds the gates slowly opened, the Renault drove inside, then the gates closed again. Nick looked at the 'KEEP OUT' sign. Now what? Back to Madrid? Call the police? 'No,' he said softly. 'Not yet.'



He got out of the car and walked towards the metal gates. Through them, in the gold evening light, he could see an old, dark villa. It looked empty. Then he noticed a small building made of wood in the villa's garden. It had a big lock on the door and several broken windows. He could see something through one of them. Was it a small square of yellow? Yes, it was.

Carefully he climbed the wall and jumped into the garden. Inside he stopped, looked left and right, then ran quickly towards the small building. There he stopped again. The only sound he could hear was the wind in the trees. Then, very slowly, he lifted his head and looked through one of the broken windows. Inside he saw the yellow Fiat and, on the ground next to it, Shelley Marn. There were ropes round her hands, feet and mouth. Quickly Nick found a heavy rock and broke the lock on the door. Then he went inside and, with some glass from one of the broken windows, began to cut the American girl free.

'Oh, I am *very* happy to see you,' she said a minute later. 'But how ...?'

'That's not important,' said Nick. He began to cut the last rope round her feet. 'Tell me quickly. What happened on the ship?'

'Well,' said Shelley. 'I was getting my bag from the car when I heard voices . . . English voices. They were talking about a museum. Then one of them said something about stealing "the eyes".'



'The Eyes!' repeated Nick, and put down the piece of glass for a second. 'Now I understand.'

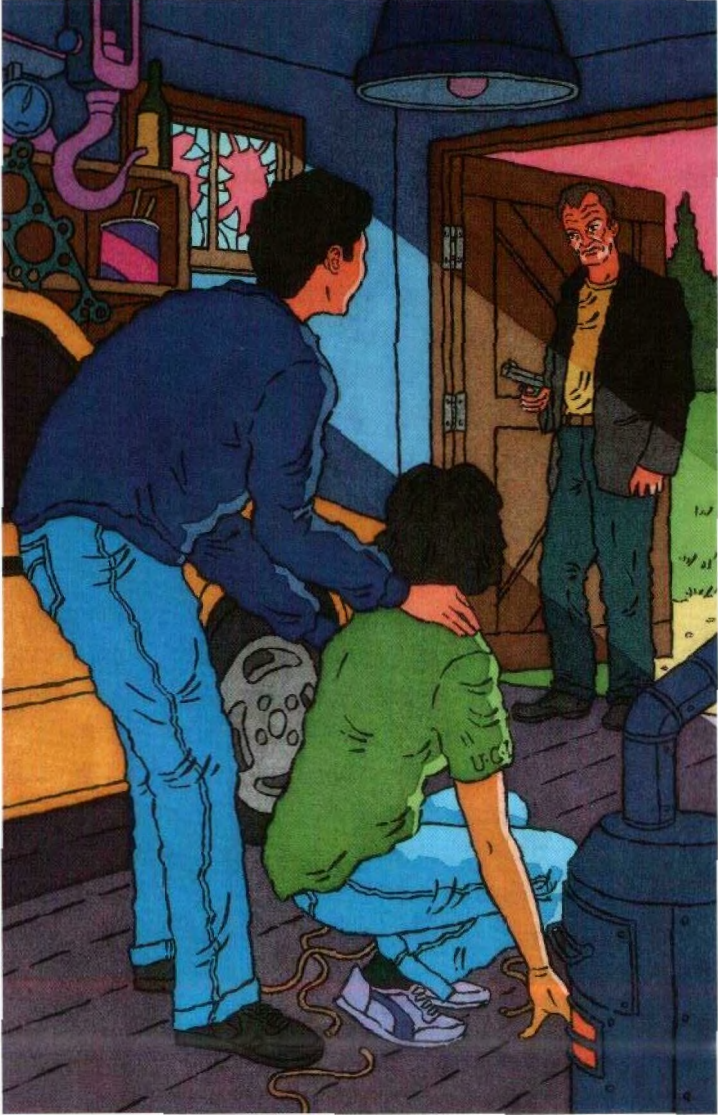
'That's when they noticed me,' Shelley continued. 'Then everything happened really quickly. A big man in sunglasses suddenly appeared. He had a gun and pointed it at me and said, "She's heard too much. We can't let her go." After that someone hit me from behind and everything went black. Then I woke up here.' She closed her eyes. 'It's all like a bad dream.'

'Well, don't worry. It's nearly over,' said Nick, and cut the last rope. There. Can you stand up? OK, we're going to ...'

'You're not going to do anything,' said a man's voice. Nick and Shelley turned. In the open door there was a tall, dark shadow against the evening sky. It was the driver of the Renault and he had a gun in his hand.

3 The plane to Morocco

'Put your hands in the air and don't try anything clever!' shouted the man. Slowly Nick and Shelley put their hands in the air. 'Very good,' said the man more quietly. His eyes were moving quickly from side to side. 'Now turn towards the wall.' They turned.



Just then Shelley looked down. On the floor in front of her there was a rock ... Nick used it a few minutes earlier when he broke the lock on the door. 'Well, it's now or never,' she thought. Quickly she dropped to the floor, turned and threw the heavy rock at the man. It hit him on the side of the head.

'You dirty little ...!' he began and pointed his gun at Shelley, but Nick was too fast for him. In a second he turned and pushed the man's arm as hard as he could against Shelley's car. Something metal hit the ground. Then Nick heard Shelley's voice. 'It's OK,' she shouted. 'I've got the gun.'

Immediately the man stopped. He looked at the gun in Shelley's hand and said, 'No, no, pl ... please don't shoot m ... me.'

'That's better,' said Nick. He walked to the door, looked outside, then closed it. 'Now,' he continued, 'you're going to be a good boy and tell us about the Eyes of Montezuma. That's right, isn't it, Mr ...?'

'Blane. My name's Harry B ... Blane,' said the man. 'What do you want to know?'

Nick smiled. 'Everything,' he said. 'But first, where are the diamonds?'

'I haven't g... got them,' said Blane. 'They're in ... they're in the villa. Harris and Drake have got them.'

'Harris and Drake?' asked Shelley.

'Paul Harris and Janice Drake,' Blane replied. 'They stole the diamonds. I didn't do anything. Really! I just

drove the car. Please, don't ...'

At that moment Shelley put a hand on Nick's arm. 'Someone's watching us,' she said, and pointed towards one of the broken windows. Nick looked through it and saw a woman on the other side of the garden. She was standing outside the villa and had a pair of binoculars in her hands.

'You're right,' said Nick. 'Come on, we can't stay here.'

'What are you going to do?' asked Harry Blane.

Nick turned. 'That's a very good question,' he replied.

Just then there was a sudden noise ... It was a car engine. Nick looked through the window again and saw the blue Renault. It was driving away.

'They're escaping!' he shouted.

'What! Without me?' said Blane. 'The dirty ...!'

'Quick, Blane,' said Shelley. 'Where are they going? Tell us.' She pointed the gun at Blane's head. '*Now!*'

Blane's face went completely white. 'OK, OK ... They're going to a small airport about twenty kilometres from here. They're taking the diamonds to Morocco on a plane at nine o'clock.'

Nick looked at his watch. It was ten past eight. 'Come on, Blane,' he said. 'We're going to follow them, and you can show us the way.'

Ten minutes later Nick was driving as fast as he could along the narrow Spanish country roads. In the back seat Shelley was still holding the gun. Blane was beside

her with a rope round his hands. The airport's about two kilometres from here on the left,' he said.

Then suddenly there was a loud noise behind them. Shelley turned. 'Oh no,' she said. 'We've got trouble, Nick. It's the police.'

Nick didn't answer.

'Well, aren't you going to stop?' asked Shelley.

'No,' answered Nick. 'This is too important. We haven't got the time.'

Shelley looked behind her again. Now there was a blue light on top of the police car and one of the men inside was talking on a radio. After a few seconds she said, 'Is all this really happening? I mean ... I came to Europe for a rest and a holiday.'

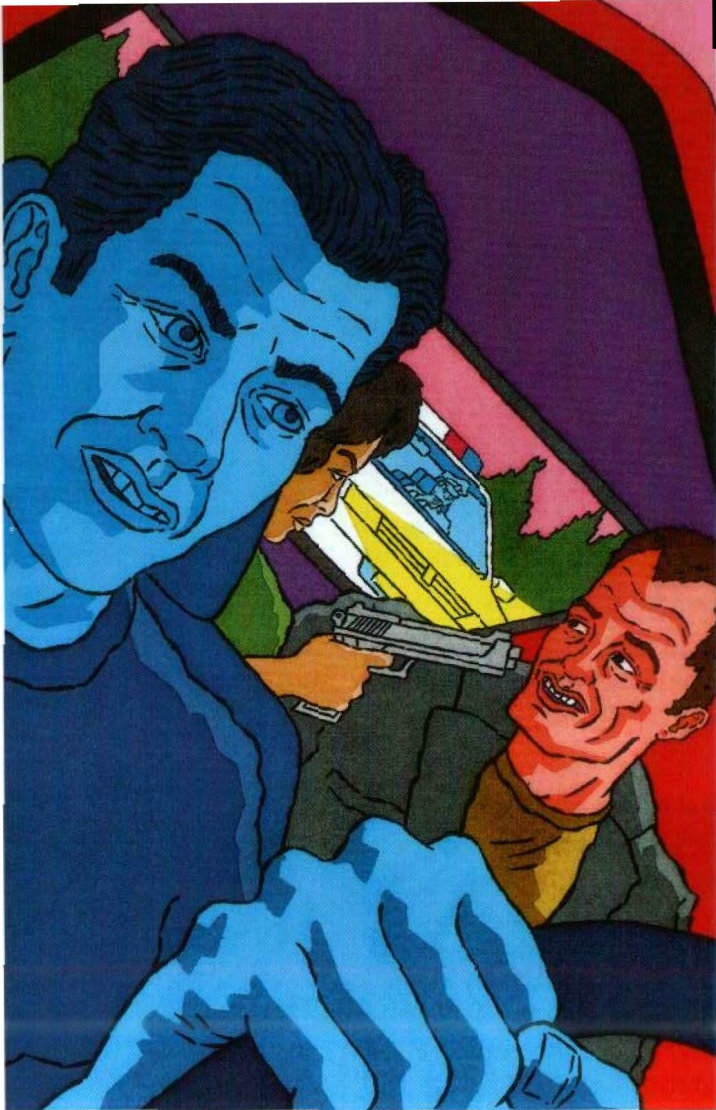
Just then they turned a corner and Blane shouted, 'There it is!' In front of them was a big field. On one side of it there were several low, modern buildings. Next to one of them was the blue Renault and in the middle of the field was a small plane. It was already moving.

'They're going to escape,' said Shelley.

'Oh no they're not,' replied Nick. They were now driving across the field towards the plane. The police car was only a few metres behind them.

'I'm going to drive in front of the plane, OK?' said Nick.

Blane looked at Shelley. Neither of them replied at first, then Shelley said, 'Nick, are you sure that's a good ...?'



But it was already too late. The next moment the plane was almost on top of them. Shelley could see the pilot's eyes. Then in a second everything changed. The plane suddenly turned to the left, one of its wings hit the ground, and it crashed in a ball of orange fire.

At eleven o'clock the next day, Nick, Shelley, Clare and Jose Duero all arrived at the Prado Museum. Outside, several newspaper, radio and television reporters were waiting for them.

'How do you feel, Ms Marn?' asked one of them.

'Tired,' replied Shelley, with a slow smile.

'What happened after the plane crashed, Mr Harman? Can you tell us?' asked another.

'Well,' said Nick, 'first, Shelley and I told the police our story. Then two fire engines arrived. A few minutes after that, one of the fire-fighters found the diamonds in the plane. That's all, really.'

'Harris and Drake died in the crash,' the reporter continued, 'but what about Blane? What's going to happen to him?'

'I don't know,' answered Nick. 'That's a question for the police. Now, please excuse us.'

Inside the museum Jose took Nick, Shelley and Clare to the second floor. There he showed them the Eyes of Montezuma, back in their glass case again. For a moment nobody spoke. Then Shelley put her face next to the glass and said softly, 'They are ... *beautiful!*'



After that, Jose said to the Harmans and Shelley, 'Come and have lunch with me at one of the best restaurants in Madrid.'


'Thanks, Jose,' said Clare. Then she turned to Shelley. 'What time are you leaving for Zaragoza? Have you got time for lunch?'

'Sure,' said Shelley, and they all went out of the building through a back door. Then she looked up at the hot, blue sky and half closed her eyes. 'Oh, but my sunglasses are in the car,' she said. 'Just let me go and get them, OK? Can you wait here a minute?'

'Oh no,' replied Clare. She took Shelley's arm and laughed. 'This time, Nick and I are coming with you.'



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THE EYES OF MONTEZUMA

Shelley Marn is a Californian student on holiday in Europe. She meets a young English couple, Clare and Nick Harman. The Harmans ask Shelley to have lunch with them. Shelley agrees, but strangely, she never arrives. Why? What has happened?

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