

Monday at Paddington Station, and was using the name 'Henrietta Humble'. Nimble couldn't believe she'd slipped through his fingers.

Nimble was pondering his plan of action when he was disturbed by the wail of a crying child in a nearby compartment.

"We'll find your teddy, darling," soothed the voice of a young woman, though her words seemed unsuccessful in calming the child. With a concerned expression, the guard walked down the corridor towards the family, and knocked on the door to ask if he could help.

Finally, the cards appeared to have been dealt in Nimble's favour. He grabbed his briefcase and quickly shuffled along the gloomy, claustrophobic corridor, with windows on one side and compartment doors on the other. Reaching the sign saying 'First Class', he stepped softly into the next carriage.



Almost instantly, a waiter backed out of the nearest compartment, almost dropping a tray of tea. "Oh! My apologies, sir," he stuttered.

"Not to worry," replied Detective Nimble. "I've merely come to visit my dear friend Henrietta Humble."

"I'm afraid you're out of luck, sir," the waiter said, nodding towards the fifth compartment in the carriage. "She's not in her compartment at present."

"That's no problem. I will wait," smiled Nimble, tipping his brown detective hat.

Arriving at Compartment Five, he peered inside. The interior contrasted greatly with his own uncomfortable cabin — it looked very pleasant to stay in. The hard bench seats had been replaced with soft chairs covered in a tasteful green fabric. Thick curtains furnished the window, tied back with a golden cord. An oak table sat centrally in the compartment, upon which was a newspaper, a First Class ticket and a cup of tea. The tea in the china cup was still warm.

Swiftly, Detective Nimble searched the compartment. The luggage racks were empty. Nothing was hidden underneath the chairs or tucked behind the cushions. No documents or possessions of Henrietta's had been left behind. He was about to leave when the waiter appeared again in the doorway.

"I've just caught up with Miss Humble, sir. She was surprised to hear she had a visitor. Could I ask your name?"

"Well, you see..." began Nimble, when a woman he recognised all too well stepped through the door from the next carriage. She was clutching a smart, brown briefcase. "Ah, Miss Humble," called the waiter. "This is the gentleman I was telling you about."

Nimble's and Henrietta's eyes met for an instant before Henrietta turned on her heels and sprinted into the next carriage. Nimble dashed after her down the train, pushing aside attendants and passengers alike to cries of "Well, I never!" and "How rude!". In the dining carriage, cutlery and crockery went flying as Nimble's coat flapped behind him. Darting into another corridor, Henrietta Humble was startled by a large woman emerging from her compartment. The pair collided, leaving both women in a crumpled heap. At the same moment, a throng of guards burst through the door behind Nimble.

"Stop where you are, sir! That's quite enough!"

Somewhat out of breath, Nimble leant down to help the unfortunate woman who was entangled with Humble up off the floor.

"I am very sorry for what has happened," he told her. "But I must thank you, for you have assisted in the capture of a dangerous fugitive — one of Britain's most wanted."



The guards looked baffled.

"Fugitive!" exclaimed Henrietta, rubbing her elbow. "I am an innocent member of the British public!"

Nimble snatched the briefcase from the floor beside her, and pulled out a crumpled sheet of paper, a notebook and several passports.

"And why would an innocent member of the British public be in possession of floorplans for Buckingham Palace, not to mention instructions for how to break into it unseen? You may be Henrietta Humble today, but, as these passports prove, you have many other identities. All covers, of course, for your real identity: Veronica Villain — professional spy."

The guards hastily leapt into action, restraining the fugitive, who fought against them and protested her innocence as they led her away.

Half an hour later, as the Falcon steamed into Bath station, Detective Nimble was settled smugly in First Class Compartment Five, enjoying a splendid cup of tea.



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