

## DIAMONDS

Manny entered first and Pearl, his sister inched her way through the door behind him. It had been ten years since they had seen the place, she held her brothers hand as they passed the remains of the police tape.

“Oh look at the dust Manny, mother would be so cross if she could see the way they have left her home. She was so particular.” She ran her finger through the dust on the sideboard.

“Pearl it doesn’t really matter now but they will have had to check for fingerprints. Come on sis lets do what we have to do and leave as soon as we can, thank goodness there is no chance that David will arrive to send us on our way, it’s the Sabbath and he will not drive.”

The policeman who had questioned them about the whereabouts of their parents was a dour DCI Goodwin. That had been three days ago and it had seemed like a lifetime, he also told them,

“Rabbi David Levy, your brother, has given us a statement and is leading prayers in the Synagogue at the moment. He asked us to speak to you both on behalf of the rest of the family. We just need to confirm your whereabouts at the time of the incident.” He told them there were two suspects in custody after some CCTV footage, but they just needed statements written and signed by the family.

Pearl looked around the familiar unchanged rooms, the clutter of covered chairs and homemade cushions, crocheted throws in many colours and indoor plants adorned many surfaces. The permanent smell of chicken soup pervaded the house even now as it always had. It was gloomy dark and old-fashioned, but as a young child she had felt loved and protected here.

“Manny, you think they would have modernised the place a bit wouldn’t you, it’s not as though they were short of money.”

“No we all know they were absolutely loaded, that’s why they were probably targeted. It’s all such a bloody waste!” He sighed, and they both looked around their old home.

“Lets get on with this then sis, are you sure no one knows?” Manny looked back at the door to ensure no one had followed them into the room.

“No, come with me and I’ll show you something. Father used to let me watch him cutting the diamonds when I was a little girl, I think he did it just to shut me up, because I would be awake half the night.” She walked over to the large tropical fish tank in the dining room and began unscrewing a glass panel.

“What are you doing sis the water will go everywhere!”

“No it won’t little brother have faith, look.”

She slid a sheet of glass from the back above the main layer of coloured stones. On the panel there was a fine layer of the stones, which she scooped into her bag and then pushed the panel back into place.

“That’s it just as I thought. Lets go and I’ll explain later.” Then they left their childhood home for the last time and drove to her shop. Manny kept talking as they drove.

“I bet the old man wouldn’t give them what they wanted stubborn old coot. They obviously knew he had diamonds that he was holding for De Boers, before he took them to one of the bourses in Antwerp. Our family have been involved in the diamond industry since the sixteenth century. It’s a Levy family tradition, only we have broken the chain much to our father’s disgust.

Plus we are outcasts because you left the faith as you would not agree to an arranged marriage, and my gender was questionable and once the truth was revealed that I was gay I was also cast out.”

“Stop it Manny have some respect our parents are dead.”  
“They have been dead for me for a long time, little sis. Although this is truly tragic, what a waste.”

Pearl had told the DCI she was working on her jewellery designs in her shop, which was confirmed by her assistant Lucy. Manny had told the policeman he was in the studio recording with some other musicians for a few tracks on their album to be released in the spring. David their elder brother had not wanted either of them at the funeral and as far as he was concerned they were not needed as part of their family.

Once Manny and Pearl got back inside her flat above the shop, she got a tray from the kitchen and she began to sift through the stones.

“These are for us!” she said. She showed him a collection of diamonds that had been hidden. “We have been excluded in the will reading but I remember father saying, you can always find a few good things amongst the many. That’s when I remembered how he used to hide his own little bit of security. Well that’s what he used to say to me, and he made me promise not to tell anyone. I must have only been about thee but I never forgot our secret. He told me no one else knew, and he was such a creature of habit.”

“Great Pearl, its only fair we should get something, this is brilliant but I haven’t a clue what to do with them.”

“Ah well my dear brother the thing is, I am in the jewellery design business and there are still some family members that disagreed with the way we were treated. They will help us get full value from the diamonds, and because of family traditions we should not lose too much with the deal.”

“You were always the clever one in the family, Pearl.”

“Lets get the money and then you’ll see how clever I am and no one will be any the wiser.”

“Yes we will be two very rich orphans, without any family constraints! Well done sis.”