

THE LOST PURSE

Thirty nine year old Stan Cooper carried a purse to save coins chafing holes in his pocket, which may have been true but he also supported the belief that purse carrying men are a mean bunch, on that score Stan made economy an art form.

Working from home as an accountant he was looked after by a doting mother in a pleasantly appointed detached house where he checked on the use of toilet paper by numbering each square. This attention to detail made it difficult to believe that he could lose a well- worn purse by pulling it from his pocket with a handkerchief but he did.

Panic stricken on his return home Stan cried out, 'Mother have you seen my purse?' Reactionary rather than logical because he had used it in the paper shop.

'No dear, you must have dropped it in the shop this morning. Did you carry much money?'

'Thirty pounds.'

'Well that's not the end of the world, anyway it might be handed in to the police station yet.'

What Stan didn't tell mum was that he had condensed details of his two million pound portfolio tucked in the back section of the dreaded purse.

On that fateful day Jennifer Page was minutes behind Stan when the purse fell; it was she who picked it up, spent the thirty pounds and filed his financial details for future attention. Jennifer was not a hardened criminal, just unemployed and cash-strapped. A pretty girl of twenty seven whose intelligence was seen by employers as a threat, who only held down jobs for a few weeks so you couldn't blame her for a little scheming, which brings us back to the portfolio.

First she had to know what the owner looked like, so to find out she visited his area for days until she spotted him leaving home, a thin-faced man, not ugly who waved to an elderly lady standing on the doorstep a lady who was probably his mum.

From that moment Jennifer decided that becoming Mrs Cooper was better than any prospect she could envisage so she formulated a plan starting with determining Stan's sexual orientation. To do that she dressed in a short skirt, walked passed the man of habit and a backward glance confirmed his heterosexual credentials.

Netting the hungry trout from that point was a matter of careful planning. Dropping a library book during his Friday evening municipal visit was corny but Jennifer knew he was a rank amateur at the courting game and as expected the flustered bachelor dropped to his knees, picked up the book, his eyes taking in a pair of beautiful legs before being captivated by a smile girls always gave to other men.

Asda, the national mating agency clinched the deal, between cereals and biscuits. Mother and son swung into view beside a rack of promotional whisky. Stan was

pushing a trolley with a bunch of once-used plastic bags hooked on at the rear. The wheels seemed to shake as his eyes settled on the exquisite bottom of the girl who was beginning to disturb his sleep.

Jennifer turned away from the bran flakes, looked at the couple in flustered innocence 'Well fancy meeting you again' she said, a radiance lighting the store and from then the job was done.

'Oh what a lovely girl. Why don't you invite her for tea on Sunday; it's time you settled down, I won't be here for ever.'

Developing love then made Stan dash round to household cleaning where his tea-time invitation was graciously accepted.

The wedding was quiet and those portfolio notes were discreetly destroyed, now you can decide on an ending:

- (a) They lived happily ever after.
- (b) Jennifer slowly poisoned mother and son to live in luxury with a hidden lover.
- (c) The three died in a coach crash intestate with their estate swallowed up by the government.

John Frostick