

Timbuctoo

Home by Louisa Gallacher, July 2014.

I heard the front door opening.

The door had been locked. Someone must have a key.

Opening the living room door I stood frozen to the spot.

There stood Gerry with his tool box. I couldn't believe what I was seeing.

He came into the Living Room as though he had just come home from work.

"Something smells good, "says he".

"What's wrong? You're looking at me as though you've never seen me before".

I stammered, "wh' wh' where have you been? I was told you were dead."

"I just went away for a wee while, but I've come back," says he.

I felt panic.

"I've got Insurance money because you were supposed to be dead. I'll need to contact them!
Will I be charged with fraud"?

"We won't tell them anything, and just have a good time spending the money," said Gerry.

We had a meal and sat together watching telly. Gerry said he needed an early night as he'd had a long journey.

We went to bed and fell asleep, cuddling into each other.

I woke feeling totally refreshed, but when I turned round there was a hollow in the bed beside me: but - **no** Gerry.

I lay there thinking that he must have got up for the bathroom.

I got up and made my way downstairs (to) make a cup of tea (for us) and bring it back to bed.

However there was no sign of the tool box in the hall, where it had been left last night.

I began to realise there was no sound coming from the bathroom either and just as suddenly became aware It had all been a dream.

I sat on the stairs and cried.

It had seemed so real.

"Timbuctoo"
(The Sequel, by John Bonthron)

The phone rang, pulling me back to reality, or so I thought. I fumbled it out of my handbag and pressed the green telephone symbol.

'Hello?'

'Louisa, where are you honey?'

'Gerry! Where are *you*?'

'I'm waiting for you at *Glasgow Airport*, where did you think I'd be?'

'Oh, I thought it was a dream, you know, last night...'

'C'mon, honey, get moving or we'll miss the plane. See you at *Gate twenty-three*, OK? You've got thirty-five minutes or I'll be off to *Timbuctoo* on my own.'

'Timbuctoo? Stop kidding, *Gerry*, there's no such place.'

'Oh yes there is, listen on my phone to the Tannoy:

"Would a *Mrs Louisa Gallacher PLEASE*, come forward to *Departure Gate 23* where her flight *BA 953* for *Timbuctoo* is waiting. This is a **FINAL CALL**.'

It was a man's voice, a bit nasal, and it sounded very familiar although I couldn't place it just then.

'But *Gerry*, I'm not sure that my *Passport* is up to date. I don't even know where it is.'

'It's all right *Louisa*; I've got you a special *Day Visitor Passport*. And if you decide to stay well, that's it.'

'But *Gerry*, how will I get there, to *Glasgow Airport*, in just thirty-five minutes?'

ooOoo

Timbuctoo

'Oh *Gerry*, where did you pop up from?'

'Just round that corner. You wandered off to the Duty Free Shops while I was doing the crossword and then - you were lost! Now when has that happened before? Eh?'

'*Gerry*, are you sure this is going to be all right? I mean, what if the Insurance people find out that you are, well, that you're not dead after all? Will they not get annoyed?'

'Have you ever heard of the "Statute of Limitation", *Louisa*? Well, it's passed, two weeks ago, actually. I would have come for you sooner but this is a popular flight and I was dead lucky to get last minute cancellations. C'mon, honey bun, Timbuctoo here we come!'

'Oh, *Gerry*, you were always such a kidder and joker. That looks awfully like the train for *Wemyss Bay*. Are you sure it's not *Rothesay* were heading for?'

'OK, you've got me, *Louisa*. Two weeks at the *Timbuctoo Hotel*, *Four Star Luxury*, on the front at *Rothesay*. Quick, run!'