

## The Missing Spoon

The relentless ticking of the clock and random shouts from the people next door filled the silent air as Emily and John Stigwood sat down at their kitchen table. Across from them were their friends Peter and Judy Farnsworth, along with Peter's brother Simon. All of them clutching various coloured coffee mugs, with a plate of half eaten biscuits in the middle.

"We didn't take your silver spoon, John," said Judy.

"Gold spoon," said John.

"No one is saying you did, Judy," said Emily.

"Your husband accused my Peter," said Judy.

"Judy, please, don't make a fuss. I'm sure John didn't mean anything by it," said Peter.

"Yes, I did, Peter. I saw you around the kitchen table last night," said John.

"I was checking for Simon's wallet," said John.

"It's true, he was," said Simon.

"Did you find it?" asked Emily.

"Not in the kitchen, found it in the hallway, next to the shoe basket," said Peter.

"That may be so, but you were still in that kitchen," said John.

"I didn't take your spoon. I didn't even see any spoon near the dishwasher when I was looking for the wallet," said Peter.

"John's spoon was near the kettle though," said Emily.

"That's right, I always keep it near the kettle," said John.

"I still don't understand what's so special about this spoon of yours, John?" asked Simon.

"My grandmother gave it to me when I was ten years old. I don't use it much, but I suppose it had sentimental value to me. Now all that is left is some green ice cream stains," said John.

"Oh, ok. Anyway, John, you could have taken that spoon yourself," said Simon.

"That's insane. Why would I do that?" asked John.

"So that you could frame my brother," said Simon.

"Come on, Simon, stop being silly," said Peter.

"He's had it in for you ever since you got that new car," said Simon.

"My husband is not a jealous man," said Emily.

"I can speak for myself, Emily. Simon, I am not a jealous man," said John.

"Well if he didn't take it, then it must have been you, Emily," said Simon.

“Me? I left the kitchen after we had our dinner and didn’t come back until you, your bother and his wife had gone,” said Emily.

“That’s true, she never left the loungeroom,” said John.

“That leaves either you Simon, or Judy,” said Emily.

“Or Peter,” said John.

For the next few minutes there was quite a lot of incomprehensible shouting between all the adults. Which gave Emily time to collect all the biscuits and the cups. After she had put the biscuits back in the cupboard and the dirty cups in the dishwasher she sat down and cleared her throat. Immediately everyone stopped yelling and looked at her.

“I think it would be better if we try to look at this with a less emotional viewpoint,” said Emily.

“It’s hard to when your husband has just accused me and Simon without any proof,” said Judy.

“Ok, we’ll get to that later. But I want to establish that we all left the kitchen around seven at night with our ice cream?” asked Emily.

“That’s right, I remember looking at the clock on the wall,” said Peter.

“Then we moved in the loungeroom and chatted until about an hour later at eight,” said John.

“Yes, I wanted to get home to watch a nature documentary,” said Judy.

“Hang on a minute, Emily, didn’t you stay behind for a couple of seconds?” asked Simon.

“Yes, that was only to put the dishwasher on,” said Emily.

“Enough time to steal a spoon though,” said Peter.

“I didn’t steal anything. I didn’t have any pockets to put the spoon in when I went out of the kitchen,” said Emily.

“Then you must have hidden that big spoon somewhere else,” said Simon.

“Well she couldn’t have hidden it in the kitchen otherwise I would have found it by now, and she couldn’t have hidden it anywhere in the hallway or in the loungeroom because I was waiting for her outside the kitchen,” said John.

“Ok, now we’ve established my innocence without a shadow of a doubt let’s move on. We all went into the loungeroom. I had the mint ice cream, John had the chocolate ice cream,” said Emily.

“That’s right. Quite tasty it was too,” said John.

“I had the banana ice cream,” said Simon.

“Peter had the vanilla, and I had the strawberry,” said Judy.

“Bit spicy for my taste,” said Peter.

“We all sat down and ate our ice creams. I never left the room, but you four all did,” said Emily.

"I think we can rule me out, there's no way I'd waste all this time if I took it," said John.

"As I told you before, I left to look for my brother's wallet," said Peter.

"Why did you leave the lounge room, Simon?" asked Emily.

"To look for my brother to tell him that I remember dropping my wallet next to the shoe basket," said Simon.

"That's true, he did," said Peter.

"What about you, Judy, why did you leave the lounge room?" asked John.

"I went to the kitchen to get a drink of water, but when I went there, I noticed the dishwasher was on so I decided not to bother," said Judy.

"A likely story," said Emily.

"What, you really think I'd take a spoon?"

"Stranger things have happened," said John.

"I doubt it," said Simon.

"Look, this has gone long enough. Why don't we all come back tomorrow?" asked Peter.

"Guilty conscience, eh?" asked Emily.

"No, I just think we're going around in circles," said Peter.

"My husband's right, this is getting us nowhere. I could be finishing off my latest jigsaw by now instead of listening to you all prattle on," said Judy.

"Don't worry, Judy, you can get back to your jigsaw soon. I know who did it," said John.

"Who did it?" asked Emily.

"You, Emily. You're the only one that could have done it. I'd never steal my own spoon, Peter didn't know where the spoon was, Judy had no idea of the colour of the spoon, and Simon wasn't aware of the size of the spoon. Eliminating us four leaves only you. The green ice cream stain only clinches it," said John.

"Fine, I admit it. I had a million things going on in my head and I was rushing everywhere tidying up that I accidentally put your spoon in the dishwasher. When I got it out of there it was so stained and twisted that I threw it away in the bin. I'm so sorry," said Emily.

"That's ok. It's just a spoon. I'm sorry you felt you rushed. And I'm sorry Judy, Peter, and Simon about accusing you all. How about we all go out for dinner tomorrow?" asked John.

All three Farnsworth relatives mumbled among themselves.

"I'll pay," said John.

"Good idea," said Judy.

"Solid plan," said Simon.

"Looking forward to it," said Peter.

With that the three of them said goodbye to the Stigwood couple. Leaving Emily and John with a lot to talk about.