

## Frank's last case B2/C1

Sergeant Frank Spike is not a successful police officer. But he has 'a nose for crime'. Will his last case change his luck?

### Before reading

Do the preparation task first. Then read the text and do the exercises.

### Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–h) with the vocabulary (1–8).

#### Vocabulary

1. .... to have a nose for something
2. .... to frown
3. .... to sigh
4. .... charm
5. .... discreet
6. ....to catch someone red-handed
7. .... speeding
8. .... a replica

#### Definition

- a. careful not to attract too much attention
- b. to find someone in the act of doing something illegal
- c. an exact copy of an object
- d. to breathe out noisily because you are bored, tired, sad, etc.
- e. to be good at finding a particular thing
- f. to bring your eyebrows closer together because you are angry, unhappy or thinking hard
- g. driving faster than the legal speed limit
- h. a special quality that someone has that makes you like or feel attracted to them

## Frank's last case — B2/C1

Sergeant Frank Spike sat behind his desk and stared out of the window. Outside, a steady stream of traffic passed by, each car moving slowly in the cold, grey rain.

Frank looked down at the grey hairs on his arms, and his round stomach, which pushed against the desk. This was his final month before he retired from the police, and, for Frank, retirement couldn't come soon enough.

Frank frowned as he considered the terrible retirement package he had been given. It was barely enough money to take a short holiday on the cold and rainy east coast of England where he lived. There was no way he could afford the round-the-world, luxury cruise he had always dreamed of.

Just as Frank was sighing heavily, Inspector Spencer came up to his desk, with his perfect white teeth and enthusiastic smile. Three years earlier, Spencer had been promoted. Now he had the position of inspector at the young age of forty. Frank, in comparison, had worked for the police for forty years and been passed over for promotion three times. It was true he had

neither the looks nor charm of Spencer – sorry, *Inspector* Spencer – but the younger man didn't have Frank's 'nose for crime'. That nose meant Frank could get inside the mind of the criminal and solve the trickiest of cases. As a result, the younger man often asked for Frank's help. In fact, it was pretty much the only time Spencer spoke to him.

'Hey, Frank, do you mind if I ask your advice about something?'

Unsurprised, Frank nodded.

'Have you heard of the Babbingtons?'

*Everyone* had heard of the Babbingtons. Ronald Babbington was the millionaire owner of Babbington Oil, and his wife Tabitha was a model. Together they enjoyed nothing more than showing off how rich they were. They often appeared in magazines like *Hello!*, with their gorgeous house and collection of sports cars. Most recently, they had invited the press to take photographs of the enormous diamond Ronald had bought for his bride. Under the protection of a sophisticated alarm system, the diamond sat in a large gold and glass case. The case stood at the end of a long, red carpet.

Spencer paused for dramatic effect, then explained.

'We've had some secret information about a plan to steal the Babbington diamond!'

Frank raised his eyebrows in an attempt to look suitably impressed.

'Peggy, the owner of the Dog and Duck pub, heard a couple of local criminals talking about it. She's asked that we keep her identity secret of course. But our officers have made some discreet inquiries that seem to confirm what Peggy says.'

Frank nodded again and waited for the inevitable question.

'So?' Spencer asked. 'What do you think is the best thing to do? After all, it's only a rumour. We've got nothing concrete to arrest them on.'

Frank looked thoughtfully out of the window. He remembered his retirement money. He didn't want to be alone in his retirement, but the money wouldn't even be enough to buy a cat to keep him company.

The sound of a car horn brought him back to the case. He put his fingers together under his chin to look as if he was thinking deeply. Which he was, but not quite in the direction Inspector Spencer expected.

'Listen, do this the clever way,' said Frank, leaning towards the younger officer. 'What you need to do is let them commit the crime. If you catch them red-handed, you've got all the evidence you need, no problem.'

'But, Frank,' said Spencer, 'we'd need the approval of the Babbington family. And there are laws about tricking criminals like that, you know!'

'That's why you let them commit the crime. Then, apparently by chance, stop them for speeding as they escape the crime scene. You search the car to find the diamond, and you've caught them red-handed! Plus, the owner of the pub is protected, and you have all the evidence you need.'

'Hmmm. OK.' Spencer was uncomfortable with the methods Frank was suggesting. But he couldn't deny the plan would work.

Frank continued, 'Of course, you need to ensure the arresting officer is someone you know is reliable.'

Spencer understood immediately.

'Are you sure you want to do it, Frank? It could be dangerous.'

'I'll make sure I'm with a couple of tough young officers, but, yes, of course I want to do it.'

'Why?' asked Spencer. 'You're just about to retire! Don't you want to take it easy?'

'That's exactly why I want to do it,' Frank replied. 'My last case will be my final chance for glory!'

\*\*\*\*\*

A few days later, Frank went into the Dog and Duck pub after work.

'Did you get it?' he asked Peggy as she handed him his drink.

'Yes. I am now the proud owner of a perfect replica Babbington diamond,' she said. 'I told the glassmaker I was a huge fan of the Babbingtons and that my mean boyfriend wouldn't buy me a diamond of my own.'

'You need a new boyfriend,' said Frank. 'If I were your boyfriend, I'd buy you a diamond ring and take you on a long luxury cruise if I had the chance.'

'Oh, really?' she said and smiled.

\*\*\*\*\*

Frank was sitting in the back seat of the police car, which was hidden on the road through the woods to the Babbington mansion. In the front seats were two young officers who were strong and reliable.

At 23.30, a message had come in on the police radio. The burglars had met outside the Dog and Duck pub. At 23.37, the young man started the car and left the pub. In the passenger seat was a tall, athletic woman.

At midnight, the pair passed the hidden police car on their way to the mansion. At 00.13, the woman threw heavy ropes over one of the mansion's garden walls. A second hidden police team watched her climb over, while the man waited in the car.

At 00.20, the woman reappeared at the top of the wall with an excited smile on her face. She climbed quickly down the rope before pulling it down with her and running back to the car. Smiling in triumph, the man waited for her to jump in and then sped off in the car.

\*\*\*\*\*

At 00.23, the thieves passed Frank's car. The young police officer in the driver's seat immediately switched on the flashing blue lights and followed them.

Inside the car, the thieves panicked.

'What are they doing here?' the man shouted. 'I thought you said you turned off the alarms?'

'Relax, I did,' she replied. 'They couldn't have got here this fast anyway. They're just traffic police. Just keep calm and act normally and we can walk away from this with the diamond.'

The man slowed their car to a stop and pressed the button that lowered his window.

'Is there a problem, officer?' he asked, his face shiny with nervous sweat.

'You were speeding. We'll need to give you a ticket. Can you both get out of the car, please?'

The man still looked nervous. While one officer wrote out the speeding ticket and the other stood by ready to get involved if things turned nasty, Frank began thoroughly searching the car.

'Hey, what's he searching the car for?' the woman said. But she knew the game was over.

Frank breathed heavily as he knelt down and started lifting up the rubber mats underneath the seats. His hand felt something smooth, hard and cold under the front passenger car seat. *The Babbington diamond!* He took the diamond and put it in his jacket pocket. At the same time, with his other hand, he took a very similar object out of his trouser pocket. He held it up.

'OK, you two!' he said. 'You are under arrest for robbery!'

\*\*\*\*\*

While the young police officers arrested and handcuffed the criminals, Frank held the evidence up for everyone to admire. It shone rainbow colours as it caught the light from the moon.

The two officers sighed in appreciation.

'I've never seen a real diamond up close,' said one.

'Imagine someone giving you that as a present!' said the other.

'Just imagine,' Frank agreed. He carefully put it into an evidence bag. Half an hour later, back at the station, he handed it over to Spencer. Spencer took it from him carefully, as if it was a newborn baby.

\*\*\*\*\*

Five weeks later, Frank was sitting in his new luxury massage chair and drinking a glass of the finest champagne. His expensive new cat rubbed her tail around his legs, and he reached down to stroke her.

With a satisfied sigh, he leaned over and picked up the local newspaper. The two burglars had got six years in prison. The accompanying photo was of the Babbingtons happily showing off the diamond inside its new, extra-thick glass case. Frank looked closely at the photo of the diamond.

Only a jewellery expert would spot anything strange about the Babbington diamond. And even then, only if they saw the stone up close.

Frank put the newspaper down and picked up one of the travel magazines on his beautiful new coffee table.

'Peggy?' he said. 'Would you like to go to the Bahamas or the Maldives?'

Peggy put down her own champagne glass, a small diamond ring on her finger shining in the light. 'Why not both?' she smiled.

'I did promise you a long cruise,' he said.

'You did!' she replied. 'I'm so glad I called you first when I heard them talking about that robbery.'

'Me too, Peggy,' he said. 'Me too.'

Retirement was turning out to be a wonderful thing after all.

*Story written by Clive Lane and adapted by Nicola Prentis*

## Tasks

### Task 1

Are the sentences true or false?

	<b>Answer</b>	
1. At the beginning of the story, Frank hoped he might get promoted.	True	False
2. Frank guessed that Inspector Spencer would ask for his help.	True	False
3. When Spencer told Frank about the plan to steal the diamond, Frank already knew about it.	True	False
4. Frank and the other police officers stopped the thieves before they took the diamond.	True	False
5. Frank's plan went perfectly.	True	False
6. Peggy and Frank shared the rewards of their crime.	True	False

### Task 2

Write the correct form of the word in brackets.

1. It was Frank's last month in the job and, for him, ..... couldn't come soon enough. (RETIRE)
2. Just as Frank was sighing ....., Inspector Spencer came up to his desk. (HEAVY)
3. Frank was expecting Spencer to ask him for advice, so he was ..... when Spencer appeared. (SURPRISE)
4. At first, Spencer was ..... with Frank's suggestion. (COMFORT)
5. Both police officers agreed that the arresting officer had to be someone trustworthy and ..... . (RELY)
6. 'Is there a problem, officer?' he asked, his face shiny with ..... sweat. (NERVE)
7. While one officer wrote out the speeding ticket, Frank ..... searched the car. (THOROUGH)
8. For Frank, retirement was turning out to be a ..... thing after all. (WONDER)

### Discussion

Did you like the story? Is it OK to do what Frank did?

## Answers

### Preparation task

1. e
2. f
3. d
4. h
5. a
6. b
7. g
8. c

### Task 1

1. False
2. True
3. True
4. False
5. True
6. True

### Task 2

1. retirement
2. heavily
3. unsurprised
4. uncomfortable
5. reliable
6. nervous
7. thoroughly
8. wonderful