



Million Dollar Theft in San Francisco

Gina D. B. Clemen



free Audiobook



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These symbols indicate the beginning and end of the passages



linked to the listening activities.

The Characters



From left to right: Samantha Prescott, Edward Cunningham, Debbie Cobb, Joe Cobb, Susan Hardy, John Hardy, Jim Reilly, Brian Wilson, Sgt. Chan.





Introduction



The story you are going to read takes place on the Pacific Ocean in San Francisco, California, one of America's most beautiful and exciting cities. The city is an international center for education, science, business, entertainment and the arts. It has always attracted artists, writers and poets. Today around 800,000 people live here in this multicultural city. San Francisco is a city of ups and downs, since there are 43 steep hills to climb! When you get to the top of these hills, you will be rewarded with splendid views of the bay and its bridges. Some of the main tourist attractions are the Golden Gate Bridge, Alcatraz Island, Telegraph Hill, Chinatown, Golden Gate Park with its fine museums, Fisherman's Wharf, Pier 39 and the historic cable car. There are always a lot of fun things to see and do in this great city.

San Francisco was built on the St. Andreas fault line which means that big and small earthquakes sometimes shake the city—the last big earthquake was on October 17, 1989. However, people who live in San Francisco rarely worry about earthquakes.

1 READING PICTURES

How well do you know San Francisco? Take this fun quiz and find out. Match the names of the tourist attractions with the pictures above. You will read about all of them in the story.

- 1 ☐ Pier 39
- 2 ☐ Fisherman's Wharf
- 3 ☐ Telegraph Hill
- 4 ☐ Golden Gate Bridge

- 5 ☐ Chinatown
- 6 ☐ Alcatraz Island
- 7 ☐ Golden Gate Park
- 8 ☐ Cable Car





CHAPTER ONE

WASHINGTON SQUARE



It was a sunny morning at the end of June and Jim Reilly was getting ready to go to work. He had a summer job at a supermarket downtown.

He recently bought a new motorcycle and now he was working to pay for it.

Jim was a tall, thin boy of sixteen and wore glasses. He had brown hair, blue eyes and a friendly smile. Science was Jim's favorite subject and he wanted to become a biologist. He lived on Telegraph Hill with his grandfather because his mother died when he was a young boy and his father lived in another city.

"Bye, grandpa!"¹ said Jim, running to the front door. "I'm going to meet Brian at the bus stop, and I'm already late."

"OK, Jim," said Mr Reilly, a friendly man of about sixty-five. "Don't be late for dinner!"

Jim ran down Telegraph Hill all the way to Washington Square, a

1. **grandpa** : short form for grandfather.

beautiful park, where he met his best friend, Brian Wilson, who was standing at the bus stop.

Brian was a tall boy of sixteen, with blond, curly hair and green eyes. He lived with his parents, who owned a grocery store in North Beach, a colorful neighborhood near Telegraph Hill.

Brian and Jim were classmates at Galileo High School and they both played basketball on the school team. Brian was the best player and he wanted to become a professional basketball player.

He and Jim often did their homework together, and Jim helped Brian with math, a subject he didn't like.

"Hi Brian!" said Jim. "I thought I was late, but the bus isn't here yet."

"You're not late, but the bus is late this morning," said Brian, looking at his watch. "I don't want to be late on my second day of work at the hotel."

Brian had a summer job at the reception desk of the historic Barbary Coast Hotel and he was excited about it.

The hotel was a city landmark² because it was built during the California Gold Rush of 1849, and now it was one of the city's best and most expensive hotels.

"How was your first day at work?" asked Jim, who was curious.

"Well, there was a lot to learn," replied Brian, laughing. "The phones were always ringing and the guests of the hotel were asking a lot of questions, but I liked it. Today I start work at 9 o'clock, but tomorrow I have to be there at 6 in the morning—ugh! I'll have to use two alarm clocks to wake up at 5! I certainly don't have time for basketball practice this week."

"Look, there's Susan," said Jim, waving to a pretty African-American girl of sixteen who was crossing the park.

"Hi Susan!" Brian and Jim shouted.

2. **landmark** : an important building or place in a city or town.

Susan Hardy was their classmate and good friend. She was one of the best students in class and always wore trendy clothes. She loved dancing and was proud of her huge collection of CDs and Mp3 files.

“Hi guys!”³ said Susan, cheerfully. “What a beautiful morning! And it’s summer vacation!”

“Summer vacation,” said Brian happily, “the best time of the year. No school, no homework, no math tests...”

“It’s great!” agreed Jim. “Where are you going, Susan?”

“I’ve got a summer job as a volunteer at Happy Hounds, near Washington Square,” she said excitedly. “Happy Hounds is part of the SPCA.⁴ We look after lost dogs and help them find a home. There’s a small pet hospital, too. It’s a great experience for me, because I want to be a vet.⁵”

“Sounds good,” said Brian, looking at his watch again. He was worried because it was half past eight and the bus was late.

“Have you guys heard the *big news*?” asked Susan, excitedly.

“No, what news?” asked Jim and Brian, looking at her.

“My dad, who’s a Pinkerton⁶ detective, has just told me and my mom something really exciting...” said Susan, who was interrupted by the arrival of the bus.

“Sorry, Susan,” said Jim, “we’ve got to catch the bus. Let’s meet for the Fourth of July⁷ celebrations—text me!”

3. **guys** : informal American expression to address friends, both male and female.

4. **SPCA** : Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

5. **vet** : short form for veterinarian, a doctor who looks after animals.

6. **Pinkerton** : famous American private detective agency.

7. **Fourth of July** : an important American holiday, also known as Independence Day, when the United States became a nation, in 1776.



“OK! Bye guys!” shouted Susan, as the bus left Washington Square. She looked at the beautiful park and smiled.

She remembered that two years ago she, Brian and Jim discovered the criminals who tested a new fertilizer⁸ in the park and polluted the water which killed the ducks and the fish.

Those criminals were now in prison. This was the first mystery that she, Brian and Jim solved together, and they often talked about it.

Today the ducks and fish were swimming in the clean water of the pond, and the children were playing in the playground. And there were a lot of flowers, trees and green grass everywhere.

Washington Square is one of San Francisco’s oldest parks and it is also an historical landmark. It opened in 1847 and it was an important meeting place for the people of the neighborhood.

In the middle of the park there is a big statue of the American patriot, Benjamin Franklin.

After the terrible 1906 earthquake that destroyed most of the city, more than 600 people lived in tents in Washington Square for a year.

Today there are art shows, music festivals, concerts, plays and food fairs in the park. During the warm summer nights there is a free film festival that everyone loves.

“Brian, Jim and I were good detectives and we saved the park,” she thought proudly, as she walked up Union Street to Happy Hounds.

8. **fertilizer** : chemical mixture that is used to help plants and flowers grow better.

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

PRELIMINARY

1 COMPREHENSION CHECK

Read the sentences below and choose the correct answer – A, B, C or D.

1 During the summer Jim worked at a supermarket downtown

- A ☐ but he didn't like the job.
- B ☐ because he wanted to buy a motorcycle.
- C ☐ because he needed money.
- D ☐ because his grandfather needed money.

2 Brian and Jim

- A ☐ wanted to become professional basketball players.
- B ☐ lived on Telegraph Hill.
- C ☐ helped Susan with her math homework.
- D ☐ were in the same class in high school.

3 Brian didn't like

- A ☐ reading books.
- B ☐ basketball practice.
- C ☐ math.
- D ☐ working in the summer.

4 Brian was worried

- A ☐ because he did not want to be late for work.
- B ☐ because he did not want to get up at 5 o'clock.
- C ☐ because he did not like the job at the hotel.
- D ☐ because the hotel was too far from his home.

5 Susan had a summer job at Happy Hounds,

- A ☐ a volunteer organization.
- B ☐ a pet shop on Union Street.
- C ☐ because her mother was vet.
- D ☐ a trendy clothes shop for teenagers.

6 Susan, Brian and Jim decided

- A ☐ to meet at the Barbary Coast Hotel.
- B ☐ to meet at the bus stop the next day.
- C ☐ to meet for the Fourth of July celebrations
- D ☐ to go to basketball practice next week.

2 VOCABULARY

A Circle the odd words out and explain why.

- | | | | | |
|---|------------|----------|------------|--------------|
| 1 | pool | pond | lake | park |
| 2 | hobby | position | job | work |
| 3 | pretty | plain | attractive | good-looking |
| 4 | basketball | football | volleyball | swimming |
| 5 | son | grandpa | friend | daughter |
| 6 | boring | exciting | wonderful | amazing |

B Complete the sentences with the odd words.

- 1 "History lessons are, " said Brian.
- 2 Washington Square is the best in the neighborhood.
- 3 Susan's is collecting CDs and Mp3 files.
- 4 Jim's new T-shirt is
- 5 "Brian's my best, " said Jim.
- 6 Susan's favorite sport is

3 WRITING

Read the following information about the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) and fill in the gaps with the words in the box. There is an example at the beginning.

home	kindness	permission	offices	founded	opened
well	visit	protect	volunteers	noticed	kind

In 1866 Henry Bergh (0) founded the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in New York City. He was a (1) man who loved animals. He (2) that many owners were cruel and mistreated their animals. In 1867 there was the first ambulance for injured horses in New York City. Bergh later (3) an animal hospital and several animal shelters.¹

In the early 1900s there were SPCA (4) in most American cities. People who worked at the SPCA were usually (5)

In Great Britain, Richard Martin opened the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in London in 1824. And in 1840 Queen Victoria gave her (6) to call it the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSCPA).

1. **shelters** : (here) a small building or covered place to protect animals in danger.

Today the RSCPA has animal hospitals and shelters all over Great Britain. Although the British and the American SPCA have the same title, they are different organizations.

Today the SPCA works with the American government to make laws that (7) animals and improve their lives. People from the SPCA (8) zoos, national parks, pet shops, farms, circuses, labs and homes to make sure the animals are treated (9) They also go to schools to teach (10) towards all animals. The SPCA shelters look after homeless animals and find them a loving (11)

Today more than one million Americans support this wonderful society.



4 SPEAKING

- 1 Is there a society like the SPCA in your country? If so, what is it called and how does it work?
- 2 Give examples of how animals help us.

T: GRADE 4

5 WORK

Susan wants to become a vet and Jim wants to become a biologist. What kind of work do you want to do? Talk to your partner about the work you are interested in. Use these questions to help you.

- 1 Why do you like this kind of work?
- 2 How can you prepare for it?
- 3 Is this kind of work interesting, exciting or dangerous? Why?
- 4 Do you know someone who does it?



View of San Francisco in the late 1800s.

San Francisco and the Gold Rush

 The Gold Rush was perhaps the most exciting period in the history of San Francisco and California. It changed the future of the West coast of the United States.

Before the discovery gold, San Francisco was a sleepy Spanish village called Yerba Buena with a population of about 900 people. The word *Yerba Buena* in Spanish meant “good grass”, because the grass that grew there had a sweet smell.

In the late 1700s California was a Spanish colony like Mexico.

In 1821 Mexico became independent from Spain, and California belonged to Mexico.

In 1848 the United States defeated Mexico in a war and California became an American state; Yerba Buena’s name became San Francisco.

The “Forty-Niners”

In January 1848 John Marshall discovered gold at Sutter’s Fort on the American River about 100 miles (160 kilometers) east of San Francisco.

In August 1848 a New York newspaper wrote about the discovery of gold in California and the news quickly reached the rest of the nation and the world. The land and the gold in California did not belong to anyone—they were free for everyone!

In February 1849 the first “forty-niners” arrived in San Francisco on the sailing ship, *California*. The “forty-niners” were people who went to look for gold in California.

Many other ships followed and soon the port of San Francisco was one of the busiest in the nation. By the autumn of 1849 there were about 600 sailing ships in the harbor, and by the end of that year there were more than 25,000 people in San Francisco!

People from all over the world wanted to “strike it rich”¹ in the Gold Country and built mining camps² like Auburn, Placerville, Angels Camp, Nevada City, Virginia City and Grass Valley. Some of these mining camps became towns and cities, but others became ghost towns, like Bodie, Cow Wells, Beveridge, where no one lives anymore.

A Wild Town

San Francisco became the most important city on the Pacific Coast, with its banks, shops, saloons, hotels and newspaper offices.

When the “forty-niners” wanted to buy supplies, sell their gold and have fun they went to San Francisco.



A “forty-niner” looking for gold.

1. “**strike it rich**” : American expression meaning “to make a lot of money quickly”.
2. **mining camps** : small villages near gold mines.

At that time San Francisco was a wild town; there were no laws, no sheriffs, ³ no prisons, but there were plenty of gamblers ⁴ and criminals. Street fights, robberies, gun fights and murders were common in San Francisco and in the mining camps.

The Barbary Coast, Chinatown and North Beach were the most dangerous neighborhoods.

Levi Strauss

A German immigrant called Levi Strauss started making strong blue trousers for the “forty-niners”, who needed them for their hard work in the mines. These blue trousers were immediately successful and every miner owned at least one pair.

In 1853 Levi Strauss opened his first blue jeans business in San Francisco.

Today the Levi Strauss world offices are on the San Francisco Embarcadero, and people all over the world wear blue jeans.

When the Gold Rush ended in the 1890s more than 300,000 people were living in San Francisco, which became an international port and center for trade, business, education and the arts.

1 COMPREHENSION CHECK

Are the following sentences true (T) or false (F)? Correct the false sentences.

- | | T | F |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 John Marshall discovered gold in Yerba Buena in January 1848. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 2 Most “forty-niners” came from New York. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 3 After the discovery of gold the population of San Francisco grew very quickly. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 4 The “forty-niners” wanted to get rich quickly. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 5 San Francisco was a sleepy village during the Gold Rush. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 6 The Barbary Coast was the biggest mining camp. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 7 The “forty-niners” were the first people to wear blue jeans. | ☐ | ☐ |

3. **sheriffs** : a kind of policeman in the American West.

4. **gamblers** : people who play cards for money.

BEFORE YOU READ

1 VOCABULARY

Match the words with their meanings. Use a dictionary if necessary.

- 1 ☐ safe deposit box
- 2 ☐ demolish
- 3 ☐ public auction
- 4 ☐ briefcase
- 5 ☐ mining town

- A A place where things are sold to the person who offers the highest price.
- B A small village near gold mines.
- C A small metal box where you keep valuable things
- D Destroy, usually to build something else.
- E A very small suitcase where you put documents, books and papers.

2 LISTENING



Listen to Chapter Two and say if these sentences are true (T) or false (F).

- | | T | F |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Workers found Mark Twain's secret diary in an old bank. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 2 Thomas Bentley is the President of The Mark Twain Society. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 3 Thomas Bentley is going to take Mark Twain's secret diary to San Francisco. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 4 The Hardy family is going to have fruit cake for dessert. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 5 Professor Samantha Prescott is the director of the Barbary Coast Hotel. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 6 John Hardy had a cup of coffee before the presentation at the museum. | ☐ | ☐ |

3 READING PICTURES

Look at the picture on page 21 and answer these questions.

- 1 Who are the two people in the picture and what are they doing?
- 2 Where are they?
- 3 What do you think they are saying to each other?