

Title: Stolen Goods

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Level: Intermediate to Upper Intermediate

Genre: Fiction (Crime, Human Interest)

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It was a Friday evening in the month of November. *Meem Farhana* made a plan to go from her **residence** in *Rampura*. to her very close friend's wedding **ceremony** at the Officers' **Club** in *Iskaton Road*. As her husband was out of *Dhaka* on that day, she decided to go alone, with only her daughter *Zareefa* and her son *Zuhair* for company.

During winter, every evening seemed to be so dark. Moreover, on that day it had **rained a lot**, which was a really bad sign. The sky was black, and clouds covered the moon. Even the early evening looked like the deepest darkest midnight. Yet *Farhana* had no choice but to go. How could she not **attend** the wedding **ceremony** of her closest friend *Rina Chowdhury*?



Because she had no private **transport** of her own, *Farhana* decided, as usual, to order a **vehicle** through her Uber app. After *Magrib prayer*, she helped her two children to put on their best **clothes**, and she dressed herself in her most beautiful finery. She and her daughter

put on their most expensive **jewellery**, their most **precious** golden bangles, earrings, **neck chains** and rings.

At 7:00 pm she called an Uber car and started for the party with her children. She had also **wrapped** up a large gift, a microwave oven, for the newly married bride. It was an expensive gift, and heavy to carry, but she knew *Rina* would **appreciate** it. As they got closer to the Wireless Gate at *Moghbazar*, the car turned into a **lonely** road leading towards Bailey Road. *Farhana* did not like the way the driver had chosen to go, but she was in a **hurry** to get to the wedding ceremony, so she said nothing. The car continued on its way. Outside, the dark night seemed to press into the car. *Rina* felt cold, and pulled her *Śāla** more closely around her body.



Near the *Viqarunnesa* School, at a very **lonely** point, the car **slowed** down. **Suddenly**, a group of three men, whose faces were covered with black masks, **jumped** in front of the car, forcing the driver to stop completely. Before they knew what was happening, the men **pushed guns** right in their faces.

“Hand over your money!” the gunmen **shouted**. “Give us your jewels! Give us everything! And hurry up!” they ordered.

Farhana knew she was in no position to **argue**. First she gave up the money in her purse, then her **cell phone**, then their jewellery was taken, and finally the wedding gift itself. The **robbers** even took the driver’s phone. *Farhana* gave the robbers everything as **quickly** as she could, **afraid** that these **evil** beings might **harm** her children. As they ran away, the

thieves laughed, and **congratulated** each other on their **clever** plan. They **boasted** about the fine things they had been able to **steal**. As quickly as they had come, they disappeared into the darkness of the night.

Farhana was unable to **breathe**. Her children were crying with fear. Even the driver was shaking. It took several minutes before she was able to speak. After what seemed hours, though it was only minutes, and with a very heavy heart, *Farhana* **managed** to ask the driver take them back home. She no longer had any money on her, with which to pay him, nor any gift, nor anything of value with her at all. After this **terrible shock**, she had lost all desire to attend the wedding ceremony. The driver, still shaking, agreed. He started the car and began to drive back to *Rampura*.

It was now around 8:00 pm. Strangely, the traffic was not so bad, and the car travelled very fast. Clearly, the driver was in a hurry to drop them off, and perhaps go home himself. He was also so shaken up that he was no longer paying careful **attention** to his driving. Near *Rampura Bazar*, a CNG suddenly cut in front of them.



The Uber driver turned the **wheel** of the car suddenly, trying to **avoid** hitting it. Everything was moving so quickly. Suddenly, there was the sound of a heavy thump. They had **hit** something.

Now, they found themselves in the middle of an **accident**. The Uber car had **crashed** into someone who had been walking along the side of the road. When the driver got out of the

car, he found a small **thin** girl lying very still on the road. She was poorly dressed and appeared to be only about seven or eight years old. The car had hit her so hard that she had fallen heavily to the ground. She was now completely senseless. Her head was covered with bright blood.

Several people standing nearby, who had seen the accident, came **rushing** towards them. *Farhana* got out of the car. Along with her children and the help of others, they carried the girl to the *Better Life Hospital* that was, fortunately, not far from the **site** of the accident. They pushed **inside**, through the heavy glass hospital doors. When the **staff** saw the young girl, covered in blood, they quickly rushed her to the emergency room. It seemed she had been out on the street on her own. No-one seemed to know who she was, and no **adults** came to claim her. Since she had brought the little girl for help, *Farhana* agreed to sign the hospital papers, giving permission for emergency treatment, as the little girl had no-one present on the spot decide this for her.

Farhana and her two children were so shocked that they sat and waited for several hours till the little girl came out of the emergency room. While they were waiting, *Farhana* managed to call her husband from the hospital phone and told him everything that happened. Her husband **immediately** bKashed 5,000 BDT for the medical costs, and an **extra** 2000 *taka* for *Farhana's* **trip** home. **Finally**, at 10:00 pm, the little girl was out of danger and when she became **conscious**, she managed to explain to *Farhana* how to find the way to her house to tell her **parents**.

In an old shabby house in the furthest **corner** of *Rampura Bazar*, *Farhana* finally found the little girl's family. Though the little girl's mother was shocked to hear about the accident, she still tried to make *Farhana* and her children feel **comfortable**. She called her husband, who was out, to come back to the house immediately so they could go to the hospital together.

After several minutes, the little girl's father arrived. When he saw *Farhana* and the two children, he looked very afraid. However, he **thanked** *Farhana* **politely** for all of her help, and for coming to tell them about the accident. He promised he would do whatever he could to repay her. *Farhana* could see how poor the family was. "Not at all," she said, "Please do not think of it. It's just as well that we were close to the hospital. Really, she's going to be fine."

Just after midnight *Farhana* reached home, **empty**-handed. She had eaten no **dinner**, and there was very little food in the house. She **cooked** some **instant** noodles, and after a simple dinner everyone went to bed. But *Farhana* couldn't sleep at all. She turned over and over on her bed the whole night, thinking about the evening's events, about the accident and about the great loss she had experienced. In the darkness and the **quiet** of the early hours of the morning, she prayed to the Almighty for a **solution**, and then made a plan to **file** a report with the local *Thana* **authorities** the next day.

When morning arrived, she had finally fallen **asleep**. Her children, too, were all sleeping deeply. Suddenly, the doorbell rang **loudly**. Farhana **woke** up with a jump. She quickly got up from her bed and rushed to the door. “Who could it be”, she wondered?

When she opened the door, there was no-one there. She looked around, up and down the street. Not a single person could be seen. “How strange,” she thought, and then she looked down. What she saw took her completely by surprise. She couldn’t believe her eyes. There, at her **feet**, was the gift-**wrapped** oven, and beside it, a box.



When she looked inside the box, there, right in front of her, was every piece of jewellery that she had lost the night before. “How strange”, she thought, “How can this be?”

In the middle of everything was a piece of paper. *Farhana* pulled it out. It was a letter. She began to read. At last, she understood everything. One of the **cruel** robbers was the father of the little girl who had been in the accident last night. He had gone to the hospital, and there had found *Farhana’s* address written on his daughter’s **medical** file. In his letter he **apologised** for his cruel **treatment** of *Farhana* and her family, and expressed his repentance for trying to steal from them. He **begged** *Farhana* to **forgive** him, and asked her to pray to the Almighty that he would be able to become a better man in the future. At the end of his letter, he promised to stop all his bad **deeds** from that day on. As she read what he had written, *Farhana* was **overcome** with emotion, and began to cry.

Just then, the phone rang. It was *Farhana’s* dear friend, *Rina Chowdery*. “Where on earth were you? We waited for ages. Is everything OK?” *Rina* asked.

“Oh, my goodness,” said *Farhana* in a tired voice, “You won’t believe what just happened...”

**Śāla* = shawl (a long piece of fabric worn by women over their shoulders and sometimes the head)

Learning Activities

Vocabulary Lists: learn all of the words you do not already know from the following two lists...

1. High Frequency Words from the 2nd 1000 General Service Word List

accident	avoid	comfortable	dinner
afraid	begged	congratulated	empty
apologised	boasted	conscious	evil
argue	breathe	cooked	extra
arranging	ceremony	corner	feet
asleep	clever	crashed	forgive
attend	clothes	cruel	guns
attention	club	deeds	harm
hit	managed	rained	sudden
hospital	neck	request	suddenly
hurry	overcome	robbers	terrible
immediately	parents	rushed	thanked
inside	phone	shock	thieves
instant	politely	shouted	thin
jewellery	pray / prayer	slowed	treatment
jump	precious	solution	trip
lonely	pushed	staff	wheel
lot	quickly	steal / stolen	woke
loudly	quiet	wrapped	

2. High Frequency Words from the Academic Word List

adult	file	site
appreciate	finally	transport
authorities	medical	vehicle
exclusive	residence	

3. Do you know the meaning of the words and expressions below? These are not high frequency, or common, words in English, so **only learn these words and expressions if you already know ALL of the words in the two lists above, very well.**

Almighty	finery	repentance
app	gunmen	robbery
bangles	huge	shabby
bride	masks	shawl
doorbell	microwave oven	thump
earrings	noodles	traffic
emergency	purse	Uber
emotion	repay	wedding

A. Find a synonym for the following words from the text:

- i. _____ personal (par.2)
- ii. _____ car (par.2)
- iii. _____ wore (par.3)
- iv. _____ costly (par.3)

B. Find an antonym of each of the following words from the text:

- i. _____ confident (par.14)
- ii. _____ profit (par.15)
- iii. _____ problem (par. 15)
- iv. _____ closed (par.17)
- v. _____ kind (par.18)

C. Comprehension questions: Answer these questions in your own words

- i. **Remember:** Where did *Meem Farhana* live?
- ii. **Remember:** When and where was she going at the start of the story?
- iii. **Remember:** Where was her husband?
- iv. **Remember:** What happened on the way to the wedding ceremony?
- v. **Understand:** Why did *Farhana* pay for the little girl's operation?
- vi. **Understand:** Did *Farhana* pay the Uber driver? Why or why not?
- vii. **Understand:** Why didn't *Farhana* recognise that the little girl's father was one of the robbers?
- viii. **Understand:** What do you think *Farhana* said to *Rina* in their phone conversation at the end of the story?

D. Fill in the blanks with suitable words from the passage:

Meem Farhana had two (i) _____ and she lived in (ii) _____. One November, on a Friday (iii) _____, she planned to attend her (iv) _____ friend's wedding ceremony, but on the way, she was hijacked by some (v) _____ men. Later on she returned home without attending the (vi) _____. On the way home, her car ran over a (vii) _____. Instantly the girl was admitted into a (viii) _____ nearby. Fortunately, she survived. Farhana called her (ix) _____ for some money and went to the girl's house in a (x) _____ area.

E. Creative Writing/Speaking Activity

- Work with a partner. Try to imagine the phone conversation between *Farhana* and *Rina*. *What did Farhana say to Rina? What did Rina say in reply? Write about 10 lines of a short dialogue of that conversation.*
- When you have finished writing, ask someone to check your dialogue.
- Practice saying the lines of your dialogue. Make sure to add lots of realistic intonation. For example, make sure to use a surprised voice or a worried voice. Think about how each person is feeling as they speak, and put that emotion into your voice too.
- Act out your dialogue in front of other people or record it as a video and play it back.
- Reflect on your performance. How did you do? Did you sound convincing? Which parts did you do well? Which parts did you have trouble with?