

It wasn't theft, Georgia Holt told herself defiantly. She was retrieving stolen property.

Her heart thundering, she hitched up her mother's favourite cocktail dress, clenched her evening bag between her teeth, and clambered over the chain link-fencing.

She bent to retrieve the stiletto-heeled shoes she'd tossed over ahead of her.

'Now', she muttered. 'Where are you, you big pussycats?'



Two Dobermans and a German Shepherd bolted round the corner of the house, towards the noise of the intruder. At the sight of Georgia, they came to a scrabbling halt.

'Here you go, Tyson.' Scratching one of the Dobermans between the eyes, she offered him a crumbling biscuit from her evening bag. When the German Shepherd rolled over she rubbed his tummy with one bare foot.

'Right, scam', she hissed.

*'Smelling of dog isn't going to help my cover.'*

Satisfied, the dogs trotted off.





Georgia blew a lick of blonde hair out of her eyes and patted it back into place. What with the racket of crickets and tree frogs, she doubted anyone had heard her unconventional entrance.

Patrice Oliveira had been lax with his security, but why wouldn't he be with the whole island and its police force under his spell? Arrogant man. He wasn't going to get away with stealing her mother's painting, though.







Forget it! her mother had said, when all her attempts to get it back had been ignored. It doesn't matter, Georgie. Let him have it. I don't care. I'm just glad to be shot of him.

To heck with that, Georgia thought. Her mother had worked for ages on that small delicate landscape, and it was one of her best ever.

Oliveira must have known that, or he wouldn't have kept it when she left him. And now that her mother wasn't around to challenge him, he must think he'd got away with it.