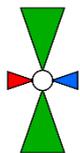


127 CA2

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bncdoc.title	Coffin underground.
bncdoc.info	Coffin underground. Sample containing about 43705 words from a book (domain: imaginative)
Text availability	Worldwide rights cleared
Publication date	1985-1993
Text type	Written books and periodicals
David Lee's classification	W_fict_prose

<127/c>	will choose. You know that. We agreed.’ The divorce had been talked over thoroughly in New York, or so she had thought. Now she wondered. But goodness knows, Nona had had her say there. Nona looked around the kitchen. ‘I might stay here. Just might. I’d want to go on seeing you a lot, though.’ ‘Thanks.’ ‘Don’t be sharp. It’s one of your worst things.’ ‘Is that why you’ve never told me before what happened with you and Peter before we all went to New York? Did you think I’d be sharp? I wouldn’t have been. But I think you wanted me to know. You let me read that story you wrote for your class magazine: The Dragon’s Mouth. That was really you and Peter finding that thing in the wood, wasn’t it?’ ‘Might have been.’ ‘Might?’ ‘Was, then.’ ‘It frightened me that you had not told me. Made it important, very real.’ Nona shrugged. ‘All the same, you didn’t hand out many details. You made it a kind of fable. But there was a real incident, I know.’ Nona still kept quiet. ‘I don’t want to talk about it. I promised.’ Irene would have gone on, but for the arrival of Mrs Brocklebank. She surveyed Nona and her preparation for a picnic. ‘Off out? It’s going to rain.’ ‘It won’t rain.’ Nona slung her bag over her shoulder. ‘Thanks for the chocs. Anyway, we’re going to see the Cutty Sark.’ ‘A lot of police down there. You’re not supposed to see them, but you can. All over the place like rabbits.’ ‘Who cares?’ Nona picked up the wine bottle, gave her mother a look and was gone. Mrs Brocklebank had created a little nest for herself in the basement where she put her clothes and her big black handbag, from which she was only rarely and reluctantly parted, and where she tucked away any odds and ends it was better Brock at home did not see . Money was one. A woman was entitled to her own savings. She had such nests in every one of her working places, which her employers were only vaguely aware of . She had a kind of natural skill in camouflage . Now she went to her corner next to which was a cupboard no one seemed to know about except Mrs Brocklebank , shared by her and
 <p>Key: Footprint ConEn1 Footprint ConEn2 Footprint ConEn3</p>	<p>a certain amount of animal life</p>
	<p>, and deposited her bag and coat. There was a small mirror hanging on the door in which she combed her hair; a woman liked to look her best even at work. She was troubled and anxious. ‘As though one death wasn’t enough,’ she said to herself. ‘There’s got to be others, by the look of it. And they say there’s nothing wrong with this house and I’m imagining things.’ She had been a childhood friend of William Egan and though no one could truly mourn such a man of violence, still she had her loyalties, and he was a man who had known how to trade on them. Later that day she would pop in, her words, to see Roxie Farmer in Abinger Road; she knew her too. ‘Roxie,’ she would say, ‘every one of us has to look after their own. It’s our duty, and you and I have done it. Me in my way, you in yours. But that Terry of yours has put himself beyond it. I reckon I know where he is as well as you do, and I might have to say. If he gets killed, he’s got only himself to blame.’ All the same, she wished she had been stronger in her advice to Nona not to go down by the Cutty Sark. She had been too indirect, she should have said: Look love, this is old Brocklebank speaking straight. It could be dangerous down there. She got out her</p>

	<p>scrubbing brush. 'I'll just give the front step a scrub. I didn't like the look of it at all this morning. The police and picnickers converged upon the river. Peter and Nona were not the only people planning to eat in the open air, because a coachload of school-children together with four teachers, all carrying packed lunches, had arrived to visit the Cutty Sark and then Gypsy Moth in its dry dock. 'Lot of people about. Too many.' It wasn't what Peter had had in mind when he had thought of the picnic. Something more pastoral and solitary had been his vision. 'Some of them are policemen, I think. Mrs Brocklebank said so.' Nona looked about her with interest, trying to identify which of the young men in her vicinity could possibly be policemen. 'There has been a murder, you know. They are looking for clues, I suppose. And for the murderer.' 'I know. I don't want to talk about it.' He gripped her arm</p>
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