The Past Strikes Back

Luke left for work early the next morning. He was still annoyed about the psychic at the tea party. He was also embarrassed about the (quarrel) he had had with Megan, and ashamed that Nathan had heard them. When he got into his office he sat at his desk and looked out of the window. He telephoned Megan, and asked her to come to the office later. He would clear up things between them, then he would feel better. Then he sat quietly and watched the world go by. He wanted to be alone for a while, but a few minutes later someone arrived to see him.

A young man walked into his office. He looked about twenty-five years old, and he spoke to Luke as if he knew him.

"Hello, Mr Harrison. It's nice to meet you again. And good to see you looking so well after that terrible accident. Are you all right now?"

Luke was a bit (puzzled.) He put out his hand to shake hands with the young man.

"Well, I'm very well, thank you. But I don't think we've met, have we?"

"Of course we have! You remember, about the new children's home? I think everything is settled now – we should be able to start on it any time now."

"Look, I'm very sorry. I think there has been a mistake. First of all, this company is not going to build a children's home. Secondly, you and I have never spoken about

building a children's home – or anything, in fact. I have never seen you before."

The young man was starting to get annoyed.

"Now look here! Don't try those tricks on me!"

"These are no tricks, young man."

The young man went straight up to Luke. He put his face right in front of Luke's.

"Do you know what? I think there *is* a big trick here, because if you were really Luke Harrison, you'd certainly know me!"

For a moment, Luke was shocked. If he was *really* Luke Harrison! Then he spoke.

"Now just what exactly are you trying to say? I advise you to think carefully before you say any more!"

"Don't think you can threaten me – it's you who is in the dangerous position, not me."

"That's enough! Just get out of my office – now!"

Luke walked towards the young man, and the young man walked towards the door. But as he opened the door, the young man had the last word.

"Remember – he who dares, wins!"

Then he walked out and slammed the door behind him. Luke was shaking. How did the young man know about the expression? It was something that Luke and Jake had used between them. Who was this man? Luke sat down and lit a cigarette.

The telephone in front of him rang. He picked it up.

"Hello? Is that Luke Harrison?"

"Yes, it is. Who is speaking?"

"Well, it doesn't really matter who is speaking. It's what I have to say that is important."

"Oh, yes it does matter! Who are you?"

"Be quiet and listen! I've got news for you, bad news. It's about that new office block you're building."

The voice was slow, teasing him. Luke spoke sharply into the telephone.

"Who are you? And what about my office block?"

"Well, you see, there's been an accident. Fire. A nasty fire. And it's burned your office block. There's not much left of it now. Sad really. Just when it was nearly finished."

Luke was really frightened. He shouted into the phone.

"What are you talking about? Who are you? And what has happened to my office block?"

"Oh, dear! Don't you understand English? I said – a fire."

There was a click at the other end. The line was dead. Luke threw the phone down, and covered his face with his hands.

"Oh, no, no! It can't be! No!"

He stood up, pulled his jacket off his chair, and ran out of the room. Mary looked up from her typewriter in surprise.

"Are you going out, Mr Harrison? Don't forget the meeting this afternoon, will you..."

But Luke wasn't listening. The door slammed, and he was gone.