

Narrative extract

Lee knew something was amiss. The front door was ajar. Then his fears were confirmed. Small glass cubes had sprayed into the entrance. Alarmed, he hurried into the kitchen. The glass crunched under his boots. Cutlery went skittering across the tiles.

He flicked on the servery light. Someone had broken in while he was doing his shift driving a taxi. He suddenly felt very tired.

They had emptied the drawers looking for ... valuable silverware? No chance of that.

In the lounge room the intruders had upturned a standard lamp and a small, round glass table where he kept his reading glasses, a glass for water and a box of tissues.

He had a sudden thought. What if that someone was still in the house? Quickly he back-stepped to the broom cupboard and slid the door open. Hidden behind an old mop and a rarely used upright vacuum cleaner was his old hockey stick. He now felt justified that he hadn't put it out on a recent council clean-up day.

He felt safer with the stick but his heart raced. With most lights on, he ascended the stairs. The office door was half open. He gave it a violent kick, raised the hockey stick and slapped on the light, all with one quick movement.

When he saw the jumbled mess, he dropped the hockey stick. His heart thumped as he surveyed the devastation.

They had ransacked his filing cabinets and emptied cupboard drawers, scattering stationery items all over the floor. His Gold Coast coffee mug penholder lay against the skirting board, the handle, like a forlorn question mark, on the carpet a metre away.

The computer was untouched—it had no value, having been superseded by at least two models.

A small CD rack was devoid of CDs. They were strewn across his desktop. Why? he wondered. Why me? His stuff had no value to anyone else. He could understand if they had broken into next door. That place reeked of affluence.

His shoulders sagged.

Alan Horsfield

