

Peril in Paris

By Benjamin Erdeg

Cameron Sharpe gaped as the Eiffel Tower came into view. The metal structure jutted up from the ground at a ridiculously high point. He had only been in Paris for two days, and yet the city was the most amazing thing he had ever seen. Coming from Cold Lake, Alberta, it didn't take much to astonish Cameron, but Paris was something else. He had already seen the l'Arc du Triomphe, and now that he could see the Eiffel Tower, arguably the most recognizable landmark in the world, the trip was already the best he had ever taken.

As he stepped out of the taxi with his mother and father, Cameron was able to take a closer look at the tower. It was the most amazing thing he had ever seen. The l'Arc du Triomphe had been beautiful, but the Eiffel Tower was on a whole new level.

"Are we actually going to go up the tower?" Cameron thought excitedly. He suppressed a shout of joy when his parents motioned for him to follow them to the ticket booth at the foot of the tower. After the tickets had been purchased, Cameron eagerly led his parents into the lift. As the lift left the ground, Cameron began to feel nervous. How high up was the tower? When he stepped off the lift at the third and final floor though, all anxiety left him. He raced to the railing, and caught his breath. A beautiful panorama stretched out before him. Never had he seen anything so beautiful. Cameron reveled at the top of the tower, feeling as if he was on top of the world. All too soon though, it was time to go. With one last glance over his shoulder, Cameron reluctantly turned toward the lift. As the lift slowly returned to the ground, Cameron thought about the days to come. If his holiday had already been this good, it was bound to get even better!

As Cameron got off the lift, a man bumped into him. Mumbling an apology, the man sped away. As he turned around the tower, Cameron thought he saw a triumphant smirk play at the man's lips. Then

it hit Cameron. He felt his pockets for his wallet. It was gone! Cameron pulled at his mother's sleeve, telling her what had happened. His mother was very upset, but told Cameron that they couldn't do anything else about it. As they hailed a taxi for the ride back to their hotel, Cameron made up his mind. For the rest of their trip, he was going to search for the man who had robbed him, ruining an otherwise perfect trip.

All that night, Cameron tossed and turned. However hard he tried, he could not get to sleep. When morning came though, he had conceived a plan. His parents were going shopping, and Cameron thought that if he asked them if he could go to the Eiffel Tower again, just to look at it, they would let him. That was partially true. Cameron was going to look at the tower, but he was mostly going to look for the pickpocket. His parents complied, provided that he was very careful and stayed by the tower.

When his parents dropped him off at the foot of the tower, Cameron regained the sense of wonder he had looking at it for the first time. Waving goodbye to his parents, Cameron walked toward the Eiffel Tower.

"It was a real genius who designed this," he thought to himself. Just then, a sudden movement caught his eye. A man, who looked strangely familiar to the man who had taken his wallet, had just barged into someone. All of a sudden, the realization hit him. It was the man who had taken his wallet! Same clothes, same walk, and, Cameron thought to himself as the man rounded the tower, same smirk. Cameron immediately ran after the man, pushing through crowds of people staring up at the Eiffel Tower. He rounded the corner where he had last seen the man, and saw him disappear into a back alleyway across the street. His parents warning ringing in his ears, Cameron started to turn back. Just then though, he remembered the man's triumphant smirk, and charged across the road. Luckily for him, the drivers that day were especially alert. The sound of screeching tires caused him to slide to a halt. Looking to his left, he saw a shocked driver wiping his brow in relief. Cameron gave a wave of apology, and then continued across the street, not wanting to lose his prey. As he stepped into the alleyway, Cameron came to a stop.

Peering intently into the dim alley, he thought that he saw dark figures, rats, he realized. Taking a deep breath, Cameron continued on. The deserted alley stretched on for a long while, but finally Cameron came to a building with the lights on in a second story window. Noticing a window ten paces away, he crept towards it.

Standing on the tops of his toes, he could just peer into the dark first floor. Cameron searched intently, but he could not see anything. He was just about to turn away, when two strong hands grabbed him. Cameron tried to break free, but he felt a sharp pain in his head, and blacked out.

When he regained consciousness Cameron found himself in a strange building. Looking around, he noticed two dark forms in the far corner. Obviously realizing that Cameron was conscious, the men started towards him. A wicked smile was plastered across the face of one of the men. The other one just wore a smirk. The smirk he made after stealing other peoples wallets. It was the pickpocket. The man beside the pickpocket brandished a knife.

“I see you’ve found are humble abode, young one,” he started. He pointed the knife at Cameron’s throat. “And it would not be neighborly for us to let you leave without a proper welcoming.” At this, he approached Cameron. Suddenly, the door behind him clattered open. “I have other business for now kid,” the man gruffly stated. “But I will be back.” It turned out that the man’s other business was playing cards with the rest of his gang, who had just arrived. The leader left the pickpocket to guard Cameron. Luckily for him, the guard was exhausted from his past ordeals, and his captor soon fell asleep. With his guard dozing, Cameron began working on his bonds. Finding a sharp piece of metal jutting out from the wall, he began furiously rubbing the ropes against it. Less than a minute later, the cords broke. The card players were so involved in their game that they did not see Cameron silently slink out the back door. He rounded the building, and then crept down the alleyway.

As he exited the alley, Cameron noticed that the sun was high in the sky. He guessed that the time was a little after noon. All of a sudden, he remembered his parents. They had said to meet them a noon at

the foot of the Eiffel Tower. He ran across the road at top speed. (Luckily for him no one was driving by the tower). Arriving at the foot of the tower Cameron looked around for his parents. He could not see them. Who he did see though, shot shivers of terror up his spine. It was the leader of the gang!

“He must have noticed me leaving and followed me here,” Cameron thought. Thinking quickly, Cameron exited the Eiffel Tower area. His goal was to make it to the police station, as he was guessing his parents would be there. He managed to get to the police station in ten minutes flat. As he entered through the heavy wooden door, Cameron felt a surge of joy electrify his body. His parents were standing there, talking to the desk officer! Cameron raced up behind them and flung his arms around his parents. His mother looked down and then squeezed him with all her might. His father did the same. After embracing, Cameron straightened up and asked the man behind the desk if he could see the sergeant. After telling the man that it was urgent, he was escorted to the sergeant’s office. Cameron quickly told his story, and as soon as he was finished, the sergeant straightened up and ordered that a troop of eight men be taken to investigate the building in which Cameron had been imprisoned. After assuring Cameron that everything was going to be alright, the sergeant left the station. Cameron smiled. This had been a great day.

The next day, a call came into the hotel. The gang had been rounded up, and Cameron was invited to a presentation at the police station. During the presentation, as he was receiving his medal, Cameron Sharpe once again felt like he was on top of the world.