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The Other Sisters sample
NOT FOR SALE

THE OTHER SISTERS

Level 4 - B1/B2 Intermediate (2) Graded Reader from I Talk You Talk Press
Old Secrets - Modern Mysteries Series Book 5

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The Other Sisters
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The Other Sisters Character List

James Winchester was a diplomat for twenty years. Before that, he worked for the British Secret Service. He is married to Sarah, and they live in Hill House in western Scotland.

Sarah Winchester is a retired schoolteacher. She grew up in Scotland.

James and Sarah fell in love when they were students in Paris. James disappeared, and Sarah returned to Scotland. Forty years later, they met again.

You can read more about James' and Sarah's recent lives in books one, two, three and four of the Old Secrets - Modern Mysteries series: *The Blue Lace Curtain*, *End House*, *On the Run* and *Killer*.

Anna Berryman is James' daughter. She didn't know anything about James until after her Aunt Maggie died.

Elizabeth Berryman is Anna's mother. She was a doctor. She met James Winchester in Cambodia. He said his name was Peter Bridges.

Miriam Berryman is Elizabeth's daughter and Anna's half-sister. She is also called Besjana.

Vjosa is one of James' contacts. He has useful information.

Other characters:

Miles is Anna's boyfriend.

Andy is James' nephew. He works at a university in Italy.

Carim Aldaman was Elizabeth Berryman's husband and Miriam's father.

Majlinda Luan Gegaj was Miriam's nurse. She escaped from the Kosovo war and took Miriam to Albania.

Len and Fiona own the hotel in Beautore, the village where James and Sarah live.

1. The day after the funeral

It was the day after the funeral. Anna was emptying the house. It was rented, and the owner wanted it back as soon as possible.

She was upstairs packing Maggie's' clothes into boxes to send to the charity shop, when one of the removal men called out to her.

"Excuse me, Miss. Can you come down and tell us what we should do with this cabinet?"

Anna ran down the stairs. Almost everything in the house was going to the charity shop, but some of the bigger pieces of furniture were going to be sold at auction.

The removal man was standing in the living room. He pointed to the big wooden cabinet in the corner.

"Is this for the charity shop or for the auction?" he asked.

"Isn't it part of the house?" asked Anna.

"No. It's been there a long time, but it isn't built into the house."

Anna looked at it. "I don't know," she said.

"Why don't you keep it?" said the removal man. "It's a nice piece of furniture."

Anna looked at it again. It was old and made of dark wood. She didn't want it in her modern apartment. "Auction, please," she said.

"OK Miss, we'll move it now. Do you want these armchairs to go to the auction too?"

"No, I'm giving them to the charity shop."

"OK. This cabinet's the last piece of furniture. We'll put it in the truck, and we'll go."

"Thank you," said Anna. "Your company will send the bill to me in Birmingham?"

"Yes, Miss. We know what to do. Do you want help with all those boxes upstairs? The ones for the charity shop?"

"No, thank you. I'm leaving a key here. Some volunteers from the charity will come tomorrow and take them away."

"OK."

The removal men had a hard time moving the cabinet, but finally they got it outside the small terraced house, and into their big truck.

When the removal men had gone, Anna went into the living room to clean. She was surprised to see that there was a small door in the wall behind where the cabinet had been.

She opened it. It was a small cupboard. Inside, there were a few school notebooks, some old jigsaw puzzles and a photograph album.

This is strange, she thought. That big old cabinet was in this corner for as long as I can remember. I guess someone forgot to empty this cupboard.

She took out the notebooks and album, and she sat on the floor to look at them.

She stared at the notebooks. Some had "Margaret Berryman" written on the covers, but others had "Elizabeth Berryman" on the cover. *Maggie's real name was Margaret, but her parents called her Maggie, thought Anna. But who was Elizabeth?*

Anna looked through the notebooks. Some pages had dates on them. It seemed that Elizabeth was about two years younger than Maggie. There were notebooks from high school for Maggie, but none for Elizabeth. *She must have been a sister. Maybe she died, thought Anna. I wonder why no one ever told me.*

She put the notebooks on the floor, and opened the photograph album. Yes, there was a sister. Anna looked at photographs of a little girl in a party dress. The girl was sitting in an armchair holding a baby. The armchair was one of the two that Anna planned to send to the charity shop. *So I guess that's Maggie and Elizabeth, thought Anna.* She looked at the few photographs of the two girls together - Christmas Day, a birthday party for Maggie, summer holidays... There were many photographs of Maggie, but not many of Elizabeth.

"When's the funeral?" Anna jumped up. A woman was standing in the doorway of the living room.

"When's the funeral?" the woman asked again.

"It was yesterday. Who are you?" asked Anna.

"Someone who knew Maggie a long time ago," answered the woman. "But I don't know who you are."

"I'm Anna Berryman.

Anna was not frightened, but she felt angry.

The woman threw a backpack on the floor, and sat down in one of the armchairs. Anna sat in the other armchair and stared at the strange visitor.

The woman was about sixty. Her hair was grey. Her skin was tanned and lined. It looked as if she spent a lot of time outdoors. The backs of her hands had scars on them. She was wearing jeans and a T-shirt, big wooden and copper earrings, and a matching necklace. The backpack on the floor was old and dirty. Anna didn't know what to think of her.

The woman was staring back at Anna. "You look like your father," she said.

Anna was amazed. "You know what my father looked like?"

The woman looked surprised. "Of course. It was more than thirty years ago, but I remember."

She paused and smiled. Anna saw that she had very beautiful, bright blue eyes.

"Sorry, you don't know me. I'm Elizabeth," said the woman.

"You're Maggie's sister. I have only just found out about you. Of course you would know Maggie's boyfriend."

Elizabeth said nothing. She sat and looked at Anna for a few moments. Then she stood up and went to the window.

"I always hated this room. It was so small and dark. It seemed like a prison to me. I wanted to escape. The last time I was in this room was thirty-three years ago. I was pregnant."

She turned back and smiled at Anna. "I'm your mother. But I called you Ayesha, not Anna."

"No! That's not true!" Anna shouted.

-----END OF SAMPLE-----