I picked up from Jean Muir in Bruton Street and raced down to Models One. There was no-one in reception, so I walked through to the airy back office and found them all, lurching around. A beautiful Chinese girl answered a phone.

'Amanda!' she cried, 'I haven't seen you for yonkies! Are you going to Steve's tonight? Great, I'll come mit.'

A young guy ran on tip-toe to an antique water cooler and filled a paper cup, on his face an expression of delirious happiness; a woman in baggy silk shorts walked over, carrying a gift she'd half unwrapped.

She leaned on my shoulder while I held the clipboard, juggling with the box and its wrappings. 'It's quite difficult to write like this,' she said, scrawling DAVINA. She smiled. 'Thankyou. Do have a nice weekend.'

The City guarded by Dragons, the Temple by No Entry signs. Victoria Embankment was the only way in by bike. I parked up and trotted calmly through the labyrinth of courtyards, from King's Bench Row through Pump Yard past the Lamb Building, scanning the lists of names painted on the chipped doors in no particular order. I collected the autographs of affable articled clerks, sympathetic about the earlier weather. A soft drizzle fell. I stopped by an ancient fountain near Garden Court and pulled off my helmet, lifting my sooty face to the rain. Birds were singing. I glanced down and saw the name of someone who died in 1976 carved around the stone rim.

I left Acton Park and walked up the long curve of Churchfield Road behind a young black guy in new jeans and a grey T-shirt. We passed a tandoori takeaway and a couple of junk shops filled with giant wardrobes and sets of the complete works of Eric Van Lustbader. At The Mechanics' Arms he raised his hands in greeting to a couple of middle-aged white men leaning on a van. They laughed, recognising him. He put his arms above his head while the fatter one pretended to pat him down, a bad joke between workmates. As I drew level the fat guy found a small clasp knife in his back pocket; the other produced a black notebook. 'Silly boy,' he said. 'You're nicked for this. Get in the back of the van.'
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