

Crimson Cap Ladies Take the Credit!

Written by Sharon Reichert

Based on characters created by Chris McKerracher

Lights up on Esther's kitchen. Esther walks in and starts making a pot of coffee. She is interrupted by a knock at the door.

Grace: (opening door and entering kitchen) Yoo-hoo! Esther! Put the coffee on, your favourite VP has arrived!

Esther: Morning!

Grace: And I grabbed your mail on the way in, saving you a walk to the mailbox so you're welcome!

Esther: Thank you so much for saving me from the only exercise I was planning on getting today.

Grace: Always happy to help! At least I didn't bring donuts this time.

Esther: True.

Esther takes the pile of mail and starts flipping through it while Grace grabs mugs, cream, sugar and spoons and then pours coffee for both of them.

Grace: (talking during above actions) So when are Leona and Millie coming over? Leona is supposed to be bringing me a book she was telling me about.

Esther: (chuckles as she rips open another envelope) A book? You don't read.

Grace: (protesting) I read! (Esther gives her a look) Well I read magazines! Sometimes. Anyway, she wouldn't shut up about it so I finally said I would check it out. It's supposed to be an amazing mystery romance that is also super funny.

Esther: (derisive) Is that all? What, no vampires or wizards or –

Esther stops talking suddenly and her face drains of colour. She is staring open mouthed at a sheet of paper clutched in her hand.

Grace: What is it? What's wrong?

Esther: (trying to shake it off, though it's obvious something bad has happened) Oh, just some bills to pay. You know how it is.

Grace: (grabbing the paper before Esther can hide it) Oh no you don't! What is it? Your credit card bill? How bad can it be? You're more tight-fisted than anyone I know. I'm sure it's ... Holy Sh... ishkabob! Someone went a little credit card crazy last month!

Esther snatches the bill back from Grace. She is trembling, obviously shaken.

Grace: Esther, it's not like you to overspend like this! What's going on? Is everything OK?

Esther sighs and starts to talk but Grace interrupts her.

Grace: And don't say it's nothing! I'm not buying that.

Esther opens her mouth but is interrupted again, this time by a knock on the door. Millie and Leona enter.

Millie: Hello, Ladies! Hope the coffee is on. I slept in and haven't had my morning jolt yet.

Millie pours coffee for herself and Leona. She sits at the table to doctor her coffee. Leona takes her coffee and stands behind Grace and Esther.

Leona: Can you believe I woke her up when I rang her doorbell? At 11 a.m.! Of course you can, it's Millie, after all. Anyway, I had to wait for her to get dressed, that's why we're late.

Millie: Would you rather I come over here in my jammers? You know I'm not a morning person. Especially when I stay up late.

Grace: And what were you doing up so late?

Millie: Ummmm baking?

Grace: Baking? Or getting baked?

Millie (with a large grin) Both, actually. I made some brownies. Then I ate 'em. Every. Single. One. I baked another pan but by then I was craving something salty, so I ate a bag of Cheetos. And a bag of Doritos. And then I was getting sleepy, so I had a glass of milk and a peanut butter sandwich and went to bed. Oh! (takes a container out of her large purse and places it on the table) And here are the brownies I didn't eat!

Grace: It's a wonder you don't weigh 400 pounds from all the times your 'baking' gives you the munchies. (opens the container and sniffs at the contents) It's a little early for your special brownies. For me, anyway. Maybe later.

Millie: Speaking of, is there anything to eat, Esther? Leona wouldn't let me have breakfast before we left.

Millie doesn't wait for an answer but starts scavenging for food. Esther is holding her coffee mug and staring into space with a strange look on her face.

Leona: Esther? What's wrong? You're a million miles away.

Grace: She got some bad news. Her credit card bill came today.

Leona: Really? But Esther hardly ever buys anything. She hates spending money. Even buying groceries stresses her out. How bad can it be?

Leona reaches for the bill but Esther holds it out of her way, inadvertently allowing Grace to snatch it easily and hand it to Leona.

Grace: It's bad.

Leona: Whoa! That is bad! This can't be right. Esther would never do this!

Grace: I know! It's not like her at all. Esther, did you have a stroke when we weren't looking?

Millie: Or eat too many of my brownies one night? And then go online with your credit card? I've done that and let me tell you, my credit card got QUITE the workout that night!

Esther: (sounding like she is in a bit of a trance) I didn't do this. I couldn't have spent so much! I couldn't have!

Grace: What do you mean? Who else uses your credit card?

Millie: Maybe it was identity theft. The news is always talking about how someone or another had their identity stolen. Suddenly all these charges show up on the bill and the person who owns the card never bought any of it!

Leona: You could be on to something, Millie! \$4,000 at Saks 5th Avenue, \$3,000 worth of jewelry! No way this was Esther!

Grace: (snatching the bill again and scanning it) \$600 at that super fancy dress shop on Main Street, \$1,500 worth of shoes from SJP. Sarah Jessica Parker shoes?! Definitely not Esther's style.

Leona: No wonder she looks like she was hit by a ton of bricks.

Millie: Wonder why they picked her? She barely has enough personality for herself let alone a second person.

Esther: You can all stop talking about me like I'm not here. (takes the bill back from Leona) I'm fine. I'm a big girl, I can handle my own affairs.

Millie: Now if you were having an affair, this would be a much more interesting problem!

Leona: Honey, you must be just devastated.

Esther: By a credit card bill? I get them every month. It's no big deal.

Grace: Esther, we know this wasn't you. It had to be ID theft. How do you think they got your card?

Esther: I – I don't ... I have no idea what happened! It's just so embarrassing!

Grace: You have nothing to be embarrassed about! These people are pros! It can happen to anyone.

Leona: Really, Esther, it's true. My accountant was lecturing me just the other day about how easy it would be for someone to steal my identity if I'm not careful. He wants me to be changing my passwords every month, never use the same password for different accounts. He has no idea what he's asking! I'm not 20 years old anymore. I can't remember so many different passwords.

Millie: We're supposed to change our passwords? I've had the same one since I got my first computer 25 years ago.

Grace: You only have one? I have so many! I change them pretty often but I write them all down and keep the list in a safe place. Millie, you should really change yours. I can help you.

Leona: She uses the same password for everything. I've tried to tell her, but she won't listen.

Millie: I love my password! It's something I will never forget. Well, until the Alzheimer's kicks in and by then it won't matter because you guys will be taking care of me and my money.

Leona: Millie, please don't tell me your password is your birthday. That is the worst password!

Millie: No, it's not my birthday. I'm not stupid.

Grace: The only thing worse than using your birthday is using 12345 ...

Leona: Or the word 'password'.

Millie looks suddenly a little sheepish.

Grace: Oh Millie, you didn't! You used password?

Millie: No.

Leona: You used 12345?

Millie: No, you're both wrong. (beat) It's 12345password with a number sign on the end of it, so it's not that bad!

The other ladies shake their heads at her naivete.

Grace: Well if Esther's situation shows us anything, it's that we should be more concerned about online security. Millie, we are going to change that password TODAY! No arguing.

Leona: So, Esther, what do the police say?

Esther: About what? What are you talking about?

Leona: (loud and forcefully) You haven't called the police? You have to get on this right away. When your identity is stolen you have to call the police and the credit card company as soon as possible so they don't hold you responsible for the charges.

Esther: I just ... I didn't ... I didn't know until a few minutes ago! Please stop yelling at me!

Leona: (quieter) I'm sorry, honey, but you need to take care of this. Now!

Esther: I guess. I'm just ... I'm still kind of reeling, you know? I wasn't expecting this today. I mean, I actually do have really strong passwords. And I change them regularly.

Grace: It's so strange. Do you have any idea how this could have happened? Did you leave your purse unattended, maybe? What do you do with it when you go walking at the rec center?

Esther: I usually keep it on me but ... (brightens a bit) I did leave it in the locker room a few weeks ago. I just didn't feel like hauling it around the track that day, so I put it in the locker with my coat.

Leona: There you go! They don't even have to steal your cards, they just clone them or take the information. That way you aren't alerted that anything is wrong until the bill arrives. And that can take weeks. That's what my accountant said, anyway.

Millie: Does that mean someone from the rec center stole your identity? Someone who works there?

Esther: Oh, I don't know. I'd hate to think that! The staff there are so nice!

Grace: We don't know everyone who works there, do we?

Esther: I guess not. But we can't just go around accusing people. Can't we just leave it to the police? Or the credit card people?

Leona: Are you ready to call them now?

Esther: No! I mean, I don't think so. I just ... I need some time.

Millie: (looking at the credit card bill) I've always wanted a pair of SJP shoes! Pink sparkly ones, with really spiky heels!

Leona: You could never wear shoes like that! You'd break an ankle. And then a hip.

Millie: But they are so pretty!! It might be worth the risk. Not that I could ever afford them anyway.

Leona: We'll buy a pair for you to wear in your coffin. How about that?

Millie: Perfect!

Grace: I was looking at fancy dresses in the mall the other day. I was so tempted to try them on! But I don't have Leona's bank account, so I figured there was no point torturing myself.

Leona: I have offered to take you guys on a shopping spree, but you always say no!

Grace: We don't need your charity. Or for you to rub it in our faces that you have more money than all of us combined; more than everyone we know combined!

Leona: That's not fair. You know I don't do that. Very often.

Millie: You've been very generous to me, Leona. And I appreciate everything you buy me. Especially my special baking ingredients.

Esther: You buy her pot?

Leona: Sometimes. And sometimes I get to enjoy one or two of her brownies.

Grace: She does make good brownies. Too bad she usually eats them all before she shares them with us.

Millie: Hey, I brought you a whole batch today!

Grace: You did at that. Thank you, Millie. And Leona.

Esther: (absently) That suit is pretty spectacular.

All the ladies look at her.

Esther: I mean, I imagine it is, for \$4,000. That's a lot of money for a suit.

Leona: The thing is, it's not. Not if you're a lawyer or a CEO. I bought one for \$4,800 last year. It was custom made so it fits like a dream. Looks amazing!

Grace: How do you know they bought a suit? The credit card bill doesn't say.

Esther opens her mouth but doesn't say anything. Then there is a knock at the door

Leona: I'll get it.

Esther: (a bit panicked) You called the police?! Why? I mean, it's so embarrassing! I should just pay the bill and forget about it.

Grace: You absolutely should not 'just pay it'!

Esther: But ...

Grace: No way! You talk to the police, let them try and track down whoever stole your credit card information.

Leona opens the door to reveal a man, definitely not a police officer. He has longish hair and a beard and is wearing shorts and a loud shirt.

Leona: Hello? Can we help you?

Buzz: Heeeey, how are ya? I'm looking for Millie?

Millie: Buzz! It's about time you got here. I used the last of my ... umm ... stash making brownies last night.

The two greet each other warmly, maybe with some kind of special handshake or a hug.

Buzz: Sorry, I got lost. Your directions were a bit confusing, eh. I thought I was going to 5270 49 Ave not 4790 52 Street. Good news is, I made some new friends over there!

Millie: That's great, Buzz! You are such a people person!

Esther: You invited your (lowers voice) pot dealer to my house?

Millie: Well yeah. I was out and I knew I'd be here all afternoon.

Esther: But he's a ... he sells (whispers) marijuana! I have neighbours, you know? I don't need them seeing (whispers) drug dealers coming to my door!

Millie: Buzz is cool. He won't bother your neighbours. Will you, Buzz?

Buzz: Nah, man! Unless you think they might want to buy something? I have an extensive catalogue of products that appeal to a variety of clientele. Oh! Here's your order, Millie. (hands her a paper bag)

Millie: And he delivers! Door to door service.

Buzz: You can just e-transfer me the money. I trust you. You're one of my best customers.

Millie: You want to come in for a cup of coffee? I've been telling the girls about your products. Maybe you can make another sale before you go.

Buzz: Awesome! That sounds great. I never turn down a cup of coffee. Let me just get my sales bag out of the car. (exits)

Esther: Millie! I don't want him here! I don't want to buy any drugs and I don't want him selling drugs in my home! I have enough going on today without this!

Grace: Relax, Esther! We'll have a cup of coffee, chat for a few minutes and send him on his way. No harm, no foul. What's the worst that could happen?

Buzz knocks and enters carrying a large bag or backpack.

Buzz: OK ladies! Where is that coffee you promised?

Millie: (hands him a mug) So what's new in that sales bag of yours?

Esther: Millie!

Millie: Would you calm down Esther? Buzz always has a ton of great products! He doesn't just sell pot, you know.

Buzz: Absolutely right, Millie! (rummaging through bag) And today I happen to have ... (produces a bottle or tube) an amazing new wrinkle relaxer! (glances around and realizes his audience) Not that any of you fine-looking ladies need to worry about wrinkles!

Millie, Grace and Leona laugh. Esther is not amused.

Leona: Oh, you are a smooth one, Buzz. Let me look at that cream. Grace's birthday is coming up and I don't have a gift yet.

Millie snorts with laughter. Grace is not amused.

Grace: That's fine. That's fine. Not all of us have the money for surgical options.

Leona: I guess I deserved that one.

Buzz: I also have some great new teas.

Millie: Tea? That's all you've got in there, tea and wrinkle cream? What do you think we are, a bunch of old ladies?

Grace: Yeah! Let's see the good stuff! I need something to help me sleep.

Esther: Grace! Are you insane? You can't buy drugs from this man!

Grace: Ignore her. She's having a bad day. Actually, maybe you have something for Esther. How about a little mood enhancer? (Esther is shooting an 'if looks could kill' look at Grace) On second thought, how about a LOT of mood enhancer?

Buzz: OK, OK. You ladies came to play, I get it. Buzz has what you're looking for, never you fear.

Millie: What about you, Leona? Wanna try something new?

Buzz: (Looking Leona up and down) I think I might have just the thing for this pretty lady. (hands her a small container) This tea is definitely not for old ladies. It's a special blend that will open new worlds for you!

Leona: New worlds? What does that mean?

Buzz: Well you have to try it to find out now, don't you? Where's the kettle? We can brew some up right now.

Leona turns the container in her hand, obviously contemplating his offer.

Esther: Leona! You can't seriously be thinking of trying this 'tea'? I think you need to leave now, Buzz. I just can't deal with this today.

Esther exits down the hall

Buzz: Whoa, she's a bit of a buzz kill.

Millie: Nah, she can be pretty nasty; but she wouldn't kill you.

Buzz takes a second to get the joke then he laughs and points at Millie as if to say, Good one!

Leona: I'm intrigued but I think I'll pass on the tea this time. Thanks anyway, Buzz.

Buzz: You are very welcome, pretty lady. Let me know if you change your mind. About anything.

Leona giggles at his flirting and hands him the container.

Grace: I suppose I'd better pass, too. Esther will never let us hear the end of it if we buy anything off you today.

Buzz: It's OK Ladies, Buzz understands the way it is. My products aren't for everyone. We'll talk again, though. I think you ladies aren't quite done with Buzz yet, are you? (He looks directly and intensely at Leona as he says this)

Leona giggles again.

Grace: I admire your chutzpah, Buzz but her last husband was a kazillionaire. I'm not sure you are bringing enough to the table.

Rather than deterring him, this information seems to pique Buzz's interest in Leona.

While Buzz is packing up his sales bag and flirting with Leona, Millie sneaks the container of tea into her pocket without anyone noticing. Over the next several scenes, Millie sneaks other things from Buzz's bag and stashes them in her pockets, down her shirt, in her purse, in her hair, wherever she has room.

Buzz: Before I go, is it OK if I use the facilities? That crazy lady won't mind, will she?

Esther: (entering in time to hear his line) No, she won't mind. It's the third door on the left. And I'm not crazy, I'm just having a crappy day.

Buzz: Sorry, ma'am, I didn't realize. Are you sure I can't interest you in one of my 'mood enhancing' products? They come in six delicious flavours.

Esther: (pointedly) The bathroom is down the hall. Third door on the left.

Buzz: Message received!

Buzz exits down the hall, leaving his sales bag on the table. There is a knock on the door. Grace opens it and Hortense strides boldly past her, followed by Officer Arlo. Hortense, the District Superintendent of the Crimson Cap Ladies, is wearing bright red from head to toe, including her makeup. As usual, she is wearing a sour expression. The four ladies all react to her arrival negatively, from anger to annoyance.

Grace: Well come on in why don't you?

Hor: Good afternoon ladies.

Grace: What are you doing here, Hortense? We weren't expecting you today. Were we Esther?

Esther: (a little sour herself and not in the mood to deal with Hortense) No, we weren't. We don't have a Crimson Cap meeting scheduled until next week and we're caught up on our paperwork for once. Just because you are the Crimson Cap Ladies District Supervisor doesn't give you the right to just waltz into my house any time you want. What do you want?

Hor: (sarcastic) Such a warm greeting!

Leona: It's hard to fake warmth when we had no warning that you were coming.

Millie: Yeah, I need at least a half hour to prepare for you. (reaches for the brownies) And several brownies!

Esther: (repeats, losing what little patience she had) What do you want, Hortense?

Hor: (grabs the container of brownies from Millie) Actually, these brownies are the reason I am here.

Millie: You stopped by for a brownie?

Hor: No, Millie, I came over because I finally have what I need to close your Crimson Cap Ladies chapter once and for all!

Grace: What are you talking about, Hortense?

Hor: Drugs, Grace. I'm talking about drugs. I know Millie has been buying marijuana from a local drug dealer. I've been working with Officer Arlo here to bring the dealer to justice.

Esther: You can't just come in here making accusations!

Hor: Are you going to try and tell me these are regular brownies?

Grace: Even if they aren't, buying marijuana isn't illegal anymore, Hortense.

Arlo: Technically that is true, however, it depends on how much you buy. And who you buy it from. Many dealers sell marijuana legally as a cover for their illegal activities.

Hor: We followed Millie's dealer here. We saw him enter these premises! Once we arrest him – in Esther's house – I will have grounds to close your Crimson Cap Ladies chapter and finally be rid of this thorn in my side!

Leona: Arrest who, exactly? I don't see any drug dealers around here, do you?

Millie: Yeah, it's just us four ladies here today. We weren't doing anything wrong, officer, I promise! Just chatting over coffee and brownies.

Hor: (looking under the table, behind the furniture) Pot brownies! You aren't fooling anyone, Millie. Where are you hiding him?

Grace: Hiding who? I think you've finally lost it, Hortense. Officer Arlo, I think Hortense here is having some kind of breakdown. Maybe you can have her committed? For her own good, of course!

Leona: Actually officer, since you're here anyway, Esther is having some issues with her credit card. We think someone stole her identity.

Esther: Leona! I told you I don't want to get the police involved. It's not a big deal, Officer Arlo. I'll just pay the charges and change all my passwords, get a new credit card.

Arlo: That isn't a good idea, ma'am, if you don't mind me saying so. It's hard enough to catch these guys. Impossible if the victims don't report the crimes.

Grace: We told her that. Would you like some coffee, Officer?

Arlo: Thank you, that sounds great. (Grace hands him a mug) Was the card actually stolen or do you still have it?

Esther: I have it.

Arlo: OK. Well, that is good news and bad news. Good that they didn't actually steal anything physical from you but bad that they somehow got your information. You need to call your credit card company immediately, report what has happened and get a new card issued to you.

Esther: But ...

Arlo: If you don't do it right away, the credit card company could hold you responsible for further fraudulent charges.

Esther: (sighs) OK. I'll go do it now.

Esther picks up the phone and exits down the hallway

Leona: Thank you, officer. We tried to tell her earlier, but she was kind of in shock, I think.

Arlo: Understandable. ID theft is a huge problem and getting worse all the time. The only real defense is strong passwords and being careful of what you do when you are online.

Millie: OK, OK! I'll change my passwords as soon as I get home.

Arlo: The worst part is, most of these thieves aren't local. It's mostly done online, so they could be in Calgary or Italy or Australia!

Grace: I'd like to be in Australia right about now. It's summer there.

Arlo: I hear that. I am definitely ready for spring.

Hor: Excuse me! We aren't here to discuss Esther's credit cards or Grace's travel plans, we're here to arrest a drug dealer! Stop trying to sidetrack the officer with your petty problems, Esther.

Buzz enters from hallway in time to hear this last bit. He stops. Hesitates. Then backtracks down the hallway, accidentally banging the door or wall. Millie is the only one who has seen Buzz. The others only hear the noise he makes.

Arlo: What was that?

Millie: Oh! I think that was Esther. She has always been a bit clumsy!

Hor: She has? Are you sure you aren't confusing her with you, Millie? (to officer Arlo) Millie is 90. Sometimes she gets a little dizzy and forgets where she is. And sometimes she eats too many pot brownies and forgets her own name.

Millie: I actually am feeling a little lightheaded. What were we talking about?

Hor: Oh please! We were talking about drugs and the dealers who sell them. You might as well come clean, Millie. We saw your dealer. We followed him here.

Millie: (still feigning being dizzy) I don't know what you're talking about, Horthy. I do occasionally indulge in some marijuana, I'll admit, but I always get my cannabis from one of the respectable retail stores in Leduc. All perfectly legal and above board!

Arlo: That may be true but you should be careful not to over-indulge. At your age it could be very dangerous. If you get dizzy you could fall and break a hip. And you really need to be sure you can trust whoever you are buying your product from.

Grace: By the way, that guy you saw, he's not a drug dealer. He's ummm ... he's Esther's nephew, Buzz. Just came over to spend some time with his auntie.

Hor: Really? Esther has never mentioned a nephew before. So where is he then?

Leona: Oh you know how kids are, when he realized he was walking into a hen party, he disappeared.

Grace: Yeah, he's probably somewhere playing video games.

Esther enters from hallway and places phone on table.

Esther: OK, that's taken care of. I'm sorry if I was a little rude. It was just so ... shocking.

Arlo: Of course it was! You weren't rude at all. I'm just sorry this all happened during your nephew's visit.

Esther: My what?

Hor: (with much sarcasm) The ladies said your nephew Buzz is visiting today. Surely you remember your own nephew!

Millie: (nervous laughter) Oh Esther, you really have had quite the day. You even forgot that Buzz was visiting today.

Millie tries to signal Esther with her eyes that she should go along with the story but it does not work

Esther: My neph... I don't have a nephew. My brother only has daughters and I was never married. Buzz is not my nephew and I don't appreciate you implying that he is. I don't have any desire to have that young man in my home at all. I certainly don't plan on adopting him into the family. And why are you making those weird faces at me? What in the world is going on here? Did you ladies indulge in Millie's special brownies while I was on the phone? Very bold of you to do so in front of the nice policeman, here.

Grace: No, no, Esther. Millie is just a little mixed up, is all. (to Arlo) Buzz was here earlier dropping off a package, but he just came and left. Remember Millie? Buzz was the delivery man, he's not Esther's nephew.

Leona: Poor Millie. It must be almost time for your afternoon nap.

Millie: Oh yes, I remember now. Oopsie! Sorry Esther.

Esther: Whatever. Don't drag me into your weird fantasies and delusions.

Hor: Talk about delusions and fantasies! Grace, you're the one who said Buzz was the nephew, not Millie. Do you all think we're stupid? Officer Arlo, it's obvious they are hiding the drug dealer somewhere in this house. Why don't we conduct a search?

Arlo: Because we don't have a warrant or probable cause or any other legal reason to do so. I think it's time we leave, Hortense. Ladies, if you need anything else, just give me a call. Here's my card. (hands it to Esther)

Esther: Thank you, officer. I appreciate it.

Arlo picks up his mug and stands. He reaches over and picks up Buzz's sales bag.

Arlo: This belong to one of you ladies?

Grace, Leona and Millie aren't sure how to answer and end up talking over each other.

Millie: I think that's Esther's purse.

Grace: That's Millie's bag.

Esther: (still refusing to play along) It's not my bag.

Leona: I haven't ever seen that bag before!

Millie: No wait, Grace is right. It's mine. I really do need that nap. I'll just take that Officer.

Leona: Right, it's Millie's. Didn't recognize it for a minute there. Maybe I need a nap, too.

Officer Arlo keeps hold of the bag in spite of Millie trying to grab it.

Hor: Have you all gone mad? You need to get your stories straight, once and for all. Officer Arlo, I'd bet good money this bag belongs to Buzz.

Arlo: Buzz. The not Esther's nephew, delivery guy who came and left but somehow has been in the bathroom for a half hour? That Buzz?

Hor: Yes. The same Buzz who is obviously Millie's pot dealer and apparently left out the back door to avoid running into you, Officer Arlo.

Millie: (reaching for the bag as Arlo moves it away from her) I'm telling you, it's my bag!

Arlo: No, Millie, it's not. I've seen this bag before. I've had Buzz under surveillance for several months. He has quite the operation in central Alberta. We don't have quite enough evidence to arrest him. Not yet. But what's in this bag should help make our case.

Millie: But Buzz is the sweetest guy! He's not really dangerous, not like a real drug dealer.

Hor: So he's what, a fake drug dealer? You ARE delusional!

Arlo: I hate to tell you this, Millie, but Buzz is suspected of committing some pretty serious crimes. Such as selling drugs to children.

Hor: You should arrest them all, Officer! For ... for aiding and abetting a criminal!

Arlo: I don't think so, Hortense. But I do have some questions for Millie. I might have to ...

Arlo is interrupted by the sudden entrance of Buzz, now dressed as a woman, complete with fancy dress, wig and spiky heels. (Note: Buzz's goal at this point is to retrieve his sales bag)

Buzz: (in a high squeaky voice) Afternoon ladies! Oh! And gentleman! Sorry, I didn't realize we had more company. (Reaches out to shake hands with Officer Arlo) I'm Bu... Bitsy! An old school friend of Esther's. I had a headache so I was laying down for a while, but I thought I should come out and try to be social for a bit. And you are? (acting all flirty with the officer)

No one is buying his act, but Buzz continues in denial.

Arlo: I'm Officer Arlo. Bitsy was it?

Buzz: That's right. So Esther, are we having lunch any time soon? I am feeling a bit peckish now that the headache is gone.

The ladies are not fooled by Buzz's disguise but it still has them all a bit flustered. Esther seems unable to form words so Grace steps in.

Grace: Yes, Bitsy, we were just finishing up with Hortense and Officer Arlo here, and then we thought we'd go out for a bite. How does that sound?

Buzz: That sounds lovely! Or maybe the officer would like to join us? It's been a while since I've spent time with such a big, strong, handsome man.

Arlo: Sorry, Bitsy, where did you say you were from? I feel like I've seen you before somewhere.

Buzz: Oh I think I'd remember meeting you! I'm from Saskatche – Toronto, actually. Yes, I flew in from Toronto yesterday for a visit with Leona.

Hor: I thought you said you were Esther's friend?

Buzz: Oh! Yes, I am! Of course, I'm friends with all of the ladies now but Leona and I went to school together. In Toronto. (reaches for his sales bag) Oh, officer, I see you have my bag! Thanks for keeping it safe for me! (flirtatious giggle)

Arlo: Oh, so this is your bag? The other ladies seemed to think it was Millie's.

Buzz: (trying to grab it while Arlo keeps it away) No, it's mine. Can I have it please? My – er – my medicine is in there.

Hortense snorts at the mention of medicine.

Hor: OK, I've had about enough of this.

Hortense reaches out and removes Buzz's wig. Buzz squeals and tries to grab it but it's too late.

Arlo: Well, well, well. If it isn't the elusive Buzz! You can drop the act. You weren't fooling anyone anyway. I've been tracking you for months, Buzz. Or should I say Terrence? Did you ladies know that Buzz's real name is Terrence Cunningham? Yup, I've been waiting for this day a long time. What's in this bag should be enough evidence to finally put you away for good!

Buzz just stands frozen while Arlo turns the bag upside down, expecting a deluge of product but there is nothing. The bag is completely empty. Buzz is relieved, Arlo and Hortense are stunned. Hortense grabs the bag and searches every pocket, still determined to find something incriminating.

Grace: What did you think you were going to find in there, Hortense? A smoking gun?

Hor: No, I – I thought ...

Buzz: (to Arlo, holding out his hands as if waiting for handcuffs) So are you going to arrest me or what?

Arlo: (completely deflated) I guess not. Not today. (regains his composure) But this isn't over, Cunningham.

Esther: Looks like our chapter will continue to be a thorn in your side for the time being, Horthy! Unless you can find another reason to kick us out of the Crimson Cap Ladies organization?

Hor: (refusing to admit defeat) None of you deserve to be in such a classy organization! It's only a matter of time before one of you crosses the line. And I will be glad to be there to show you all the door!

Esther: Well, since that isn't happening today, it will be MY pleasure to show YOU the door!

Esther gestures towards the door. Arlo and Hortense exit. Buzz breathes a huge sigh of relief and waves the wig like a fan.

Buzz: Wow! Is it hot in this outfit! And these shoes! (reaches down to take the heels off and place them on the table) How do you girls wear these things? Ow my poor toes!

Millie, Leona and Grace burst into laughter. Esther just shakes her head at Buzz.

Millie: Oh Buzz, that was amazing!

Grace: I was trying so hard not to laugh, I think I peed a little.

Leona: Grace!

Grace: Hey, I had a lot of coffee this morning. Oh! Actually ...

Grace exits quickly down the hallway. Leona and Millie burst out laughing again. Suddenly Millie stops laughing and hurries after Grace down the hallway.

Buzz: Well I'm glad the officer couldn't arrest me, but what happened to all my product?

Leona: I have no idea! I thought your bag was full when you got here.

Buzz: It was! I've lost nearly \$2,000 worth of product. That's gonna set Buzz back a couple of days, for sure. Some of my clients are going to be extremely disappointed.

Grace enters in time to hear him.

Grace: Oh Buzz, I'm so sorry! I wish there was something we could do to help.

Buzz: Thanks, so does Buzz, believe me! (he slips out of the dress and puts it on the table) I'd better get going. I have some phone calls to make. Can you tell Millie goodbye for me? Tell her to go easy on her stash, though, it's going to be a while before I can get any more.

Millie enters from the hallway as he is speaking.

Millie: You can tell her yourself, Buzz. But before you go, I have something that might help.

Millie starts emptying her pockets, hair, bra, etc., of all the products she took from Buzz's bag. This should take a while and be a drawn-out process. Buzz and the ladies stand there gobsmacked as they watch her. There should be quite a pile of products on the floor or table before she is done.

Buzz: Millie! My product! You – you stole it? Why would you do that?

Millie: Well, at first I just wanted the tea. I was going to pay you for it later, I just didn't want Esther to know I was buying it. She was in such a mood today!

Esther: Humph! I wonder why?

Millie: Then when Hortense and Arlo arrived, I thought it wouldn't hurt to move Buzz's stash to a safer place.

Buzz: Millie you are a life saver! Seriously, I was downplaying it, but you saved my a – butt here! Thank you so much!

Esther: So you deliberately interfered with a police investigation, Millie? I'm not sure how I feel about that.

Millie: Did I? I don't know. You know at my age I just get so confused sometimes.

Grace and Leona burst out laughing. Even Esther smiles a little at Millie's antics.

Esther: Fine. I can see I'm outnumbered here today. I'll let it go this time. Only this time, mind you. And only because it was worth a lot to see Hortense foiled of her evil plan to close our Crimson Cap chapter.

Grace: The look on her face was priceless!

Leona: Absolutely! She was almost speechless and for Horty, that's saying a lot!

Millie: (finding yet another bag or bottle somewhere on her person and handing it to Buzz) I think that's the last of it, Buzz.

Buzz: Thanks, Millie. I really owe you. Esther, I'm sorry for all this. I know you aren't exactly a fan of mine.

Esther: No, I'm not. It's time for you to go, Buzz.

Buzz hesitates.

Esther: I can still call Hortense back!

Buzz: No! I mean, no, that won't be necessary. I'm going. Bye Millie. Grace. (beat) Leona. (giving her a long, long look from head to toe that makes her blush) And don't forget that e-transfer, Millie. Bye ladies!

Buzz exits.

Leona: So now that that's cleared up, what did the credit card company say, Esther?

Esther: What? Oh, not much. They are going to cancel my card, issue me a new one. You know. The usual drill when your card is stolen. So where are we going for lunch?

Grace: Can we go to the diner? I love their lasagna.

Millie: That sounds great. They make a mean steak sandwich, too, and (notices the shoes Buzz has left on the table) ... Hey! Esther? Where did you get those shoes? They look expensive.

Esther: What? Oh! I've had those for years. Got them at a thrift shop, actually. (reaches to grab the shoes but Leona gets to them first)

Leona: (looking at the shoes and flipping them over) Thrift shop, eh? Then why is there a brand new-looking tag on the bottom? One that says SJP?!

Millie: SJP? You bought a pair of SJP shoes? When?

Esther: Ummm ... oh I don't know. A while ago, I guess.

Grace: SJP shoes? Like the ones on your credit card bill? That is quite the co-incidence.

Esther: (weakly) It really is, isn't it?

Leona: And that comment you made about the fancy suit from Saks? How did you know what the \$4,000 charge was for?

Esther: I don't know what you're talking about. Are we going for lunch or what? Cause I need to eat something.

Grace: Esther. Spill. Now.

Millie: I don't understand. What's happening?

Leona: What's happening is that Esther is a big, fat liar.

Millie: She is? Huh. Who knew?

Grace: Millie don't you get it? Esther's credit card wasn't stolen. There was no identity thief. Esther bought all of that stuff herself and then lied about it.

Esther: No! I didn't lie! I just didn't correct you when you assumed my card was stolen.

Grace: But why? Why would you do that?

Esther: Why? Why do you think? You said it yourself. Esther doesn't like to spend money. Esther is tight-fisted. Esther would never shop at Saks 5th Avenue.

Leona: So why did you?

Esther: (hesitates for a moment then ...) I don't know, I just ... I saw this amazing dress in a shop a few months ago and I wanted so badly to try it on but I looked at the price tag and it was so expensive! And all I could hear was my mother's voice in my head, warning me about overspending, about not buying frivolous things and not being foolish with my money. I got out of there as fast as I could. But then I heard Grace's voice, mocking me for being so stingy, pinching pennies until they squeak. (defiant) So I went back and bought it. (beat) And then I went online and bought a few more things.

Grace: Oh Esther!

Esther: And then when the bill came today, I couldn't believe how much I'd spent and I just kind of panicked.

Leona: Oh Esther! I'm sorry we teased you. You do like to pinch pennies but that isn't a bad thing! If it wasn't for you, our Crimson Cap Ladies chapter would be in serious debt! Way worse than we are. Then Horthy really would have a reason to complain!

Grace: Absolutely!

Grace, Millie and Leona close in for a group hug.

Millie: We're so sorry, honey.

Esther: Thank you! You ladies are the best. I'm sorry I lied.

Millie: I do have one question.

Esther: What is it, Millie?

Millie: How big are your feet? I mean, if Buzz could wear your heels? What are you like, size 15? Seriously!

Grace, Leona and Esther all burst out laughing.

End of play