



*The*  
*Tiger Lily*  
CODE

QUICKREADS

JANET LORIMER



“**O**ne of you five is a thief and a traitor!”

Sabrina Sweet leaned forward, glaring at the people grouped around the conference table.

For a moment, no one in the room moved or spoke.

At the back of the room, Kim Manners shifted uneasily in her chair. She knew that Sabrina couldn't be talking to *her*. This was Kim's first day on the job at Sabrina's cosmetics company, Sweet Scents. But even at that, Sabrina's accusations made the new employee feel uncomfortable.

For Kim, working at Sweet Scents was temporary—a way to earn money for college. Her real interest lay in the

field of espionage—spying. Kim was studying to be a cryptologist. Someday she wanted to be a code-breaker for the United States government.

Kim glanced at the others grouped around the table. Sabrina Sweet was the president and founder of Sweet Scents. She was unusually attractive and well dressed. But she was no match for her vice president, Veronica Slade. Veronica was one of the most glamorous women Kim had ever met.

Steve Murray sat next to Veronica. As Sabrina's head chemist, he created the formulas for all the company's perfumes. Kim couldn't imagine Steve stealing anything. Besides, he was engaged to Kim's older sister, Karen. "And Steve just isn't the sneaky type," Kim thought to herself.

Karen sat on the other side of the table. She worked in the advertising department, creating ads to sell the perfumes. She was the one who'd helped Kim get this "go-fer" job. Two more employees also sat at the

table—Pat in accounting and Linda in sales. Kim hardly knew them at all.

Then a sudden explosion of angry voices broke the silence. People were reacting to what Sabrina had just said.

“—*never been called a thief before*—”

“—*can’t prove it was one of us*—”

“Oh, I do have proof!” Sabrina’s voice rose above the others. She held up an article torn from the local newspaper. “Eden Cosmetics is introducing a new perfume,” she went on, “called White Lace. We planned to introduce *our* new perfume—Frosted Satin—in less than a month! Now Eden has beaten us to it.”

“We can always change the name of our perfume,” Karen said. “It’s not too late to develop a new ad campaign.”

Sabrina glared at Karen as she plunked down a tiny perfume bottle on the table. Karen reached out for the new Eden scent and sniffed it. Then she gasped in alarm. “Oh, no! It’s *identical!*” she cried out in a shocked voice.

Sabrina nodded slowly. “This is the second time in less than a year that Eden Cosmetics has come out with a product *we* developed! We’re losing business!”

“But how can Eden—” Pat began.

“Very easily,” Sabrina cut in coldly. “One of *you* has to be passing our secrets to Eden Cosmetics!”

“Industrial spying!” Kim thought. The word “spy” made most people think of military secrets. But Kim knew that businesses often spied on their rivals. Industrial spying was big business. And the cosmetics industry was *huge*. After all, it included everything from perfumes to hair products, from makeup to aftershave! If Sabrina couldn’t stop the spy, Sweet Scents could very well be put out of business.

A few minutes later, the meeting broke up. Kim walked out of the boardroom with Steve and Karen.



“Who could *do* such a thing?” Karen wondered aloud.

“Money could be a motive,” Kim said, as they walked down the long hall. “Eden Cosmetics would pay a fortune for Sweet Scents’ secrets.” She thought for a moment. “And revenge could be another motive. Is there anyone working here who might be holding a grudge against Sabrina?”

Karen frowned. “Sabrina fired one of our workers just a few months ago,” she said. “Remember him, Steve? The guy’s name was Joe something.”

Steve nodded. “Yeah, that’s right. I’d almost forgotten about him. But he had it coming. That guy was always late for work. And his work was sloppy.”

“Where did he go after he left Sweet Scents?” Kim asked.

Steve and Karen didn’t know. “I don’t see how he could be stealing from us,” Steve added. “Those formulas are locked up as tight as the gold in Fort Knox.”

Kim remembered Sabrina Sweet's last words to her workers. "Mark my words: This thief will go to prison for a very long time—I promise!"



The rest of the week was uneventful. Kim was glad that she didn't sit at a desk all day. She was an active person, and she needed variety to keep from being bored. As she learned her way around, Kim got to know the other workers much better. Everyone was kind and helpful, but Kim could sense the underlying stress. Sabrina's threat had left everyone tense and fearful.

"I hope Sabrina catches the thief soon!" Karen exclaimed one day in the lunchroom. "I'm so tired of watching other people out of the corner of my eye. It's horrible when you wonder if the person working next to you is stealing!" With a big sigh, she rewrapped her half-eaten sandwich and thrust it aside.

“We can’t do anything about other people,” Steve said. “Besides, you and I have something else to think about—like our wedding!”

Karen smiled. “I guess I *am* over-reacting,” she admitted. “It’s hard not to. Just this morning I caught Pat going through my desk. When I asked her what she was looking for, she turned bright red. She said she was looking for a paperclip. I pointed out several paperclips lying on top of my desk. She said she hadn’t noticed them—but it made me wonder.”

“Steve’ right. Sabrina’s going to have all her workers at each other’s throats,” Kim said. “You guys need to be planning your wedding, not worrying about who’s spying on whom!”

Karen agreed. For the rest of the lunch hour, she and Steve talked about the wedding. Kim pretended to be interested. But deep down she was wondering about the future of Sweet Scents. It didn’t matter much to *her* if Sabrina’s company



went out of business. But it would make a *big* difference to people like Steve and Karen.



A few weeks later, Sabrina called everyone together for another meeting. Kim thought Sabrina looked very excited as she stood at the head of the table. “Maybe she’s caught the thief,” Kim thought. “What a relief that would be!”

But Sabrina had other news.

“We have a terrific new perfume,” she said proudly as she passed around a sample. “I’ve decided to call it Tiger Lily.”

“Sabrina, this scent is *marvelous!*” Veronica exclaimed. “But why the secrecy? I knew nothing about it.”

“I’m taking no chances,” Sabrina replied. “Steve and I worked on it alone. Believe me, this is one formula that isn’t going to be stolen.”

Sabrina gazed at her workers. “We don’t have much time, people. I mean to

have Tiger Lily in the stores before the holiday season.”

Everyone stared at her in stunned silence. Bringing a new product to market took *months!* Kim wondered if they could meet Sabrina’s goal.

Before the meeting ended, Sabrina brought up the subject of security. “From now on, the lab is going to be off-limits to most of you. I know that’s going to make it difficult to do your work. But until we have Tiger Lily out on the market, we can’t be too careful.”

The subject of who could go in and out of the lab came up later in the lunchroom. Pat was the first to complain. “I’ve never been suspected of anything,” she grumbled. “There are papers I need to get from the lab, and—”

“Don’t take it personally,” Veronica cut in. “Try to see it from Sabrina’s point of view.” Veronica stabbed her fork into her salad. “You heard her say that she can’t afford to take any chances.”