

*Victoria's dad has been accused of stealing one million pounds from the bank where he works. Victoria is convinced her dad is innocent. Late one night, she decides to hack into the bank's computer to find out who really stole the money.*

Gib's hair was sticking up in tufts. He'd obviously just got out of bed.

'I couldn't sleep. I came down for a glass of water,' Gib said at last. 'What're you doing?'

'None of your business,' I replied. Not for the first time I wished I could think of something devastatingly cutting and witty to say. Turning back to the PC screen, I typed in the user name and password for the third time, aware that Gib had walked over to stand behind me.

Go away, I thought sullenly.

I hated people standing behind me and watching what I was doing at the best of times. And this certainly wasn't the best of times.

**ACCESS DENIED. PLEASE CONTACT SYSTEM MANAGER**

I wasn't really surprised to see that message a third time.

'What're you doing?' Gib asked again.

Breathing deeply, I said, 'I'm trying to find out what's going on at Dad's bank.'

That was all the encouragement Gib needed. He almost ran to get a chair from around the dinner table before bringing it over and placing it right next to mine. He sat down. I scowled at him, but he didn't get the unsuitable hint. He didn't move. He fidgeted on his chair and looked away from me to the PC, but he didn't go away.

'So how's it going?' he asked, reading the screen.

'Not very well at the moment,' I said reluctantly. 'I've got as far as logging on to the bank's network but I haven't managed to log on to Dad's account to do anything yet. And I've tried three times.'

'So why can't you log on?' Gib asked.

'I... I think they must've disabled Dad's account. I couldn't have got the password wrong three times in a row.'

'Can't you double-check what password you did type in, then?' asked Gib.

I shook my head. 'When you type in a password, it doesn't show on the screen. Passwords are supposed to be secret. They wouldn't be very secret if anyone walking past your screen could see your password every time you logged on.'

'So what're you going to do now?'

'Why the sudden interest?' I couldn't help asking.

There was a pause before Gib answered.

'I want to find out what's going on just as much as you do. I want to help too,' Gib said, looking down at the carpet.

Yeah, but when I try to help, you call it crawling, I thought.

All of a sudden my eyes were stinging again. I took a deep breath and opened my eyes wide, and the stinging faded. When I was sure I wouldn't embarrass myself, I said, 'I'll log on to the computer using Dad's second account - his TEST account. He uses it for checking and testing programs. Let's hope this works.'

This time I clicked on the TEST LOGON icon.

Enter username: TEST

Enter password:

'Cross your fingers,' I said to Gib. My hands hovered over the keyboard. Please let this work, I thought desperately. If this didn't work then I'd be stuck.

I typed in the password - JABBERWOCKY44. The screen cleared. Then:

UNIVERSAL BANK DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

THIS SYSTEM IS FOR THE EXCLUSIVE USE OF UNIVERSAL BANK PERSONNEL. ANY UNAUTHORIZED ACCESS TO THIS ACCOUNT MAY LEAD TO PROSECUTION.

You have 3 new mail messages

test>

appeared on the screen.

'Yeah! I'm in!' I yelled, before I remembered that Mum was upstairs.

'Shush!' Gib said urgently.

By Malorie Blackman