

Look, all I was doing was minding my own business, sitting in my usual spot, doing no-one no harm. It's not my fault things turned out the way they did, is it? You need convincing? Come and sit down here – don't worry, she won't bite – and I'll tell you all about it.

We were working the main street in town that day. If you get the pitch by the supermarket you catch most of the sun, and when the days are only just nicely getting longer you need all the warmth you can get. It was getting on for 3 o'clock, and we'd not done too bad. I'd taken a quick peek, and there were quite a few pound coins in the hat, as well as the usual silver and coppers. My own theory is that people's pockets tend to melt along with the ice, and a smile doesn't hurt neither.

Anyway, I was tucked up, all snug with the blanket around my knees, Bonnie curled up tight with her nose firmly hidden under her tail. If you've got a dog, especially one who can do cute as well as Bonnie can, that helps too. Ever since I found her in a cardboard box at the back of Pizza World, shivering and crying for her mum (some basket must have ripped her from the teat and chucked her away), we've been family. I've cared for her, managed to feed her ok, and she keeps me going. Keeps me from doing things that I really shouldn't think of doing.

I've drifted, haven't I? Bad habit of mine, please excuse me. Oh yes, we were sitting as quiet as can be, when these blokes run past, must have been three or four of them, all carrying a ruck of bags in their arms. Their faces were hard and tight, and they had that certain feeling about them. You wouldn't argue with them, that's all I'm saying, not if you fancied having both legs working. Anyway, the guy at the back dropped one of these bags, but they were running so fast they didn't bother looking back. That's when I heard alarms and shouting from further down the street, and realised that something had gone off.

This bag was lying only a few feet away. Did anyone pick it up? Nah. They all stared after these men like sheep, mouths open and catching flies, then carried on. Like nothing had happened! I looked at Bonnie. She looked at me. As I said, we're family, and families can say stuff on all levels, some of it other folks can't hear. I looked towards the bag, and she was up and back before you could say 'knife'. By the time the police turned up, we'd long moved on.

Of course, it was in all the papers the next day. I even bought one for the first time in years just to confirm that it was true. The robbers were particularly competent, and to this day they – and the money, a very tidy sum – have never been found. Well, most of the money, anyway. Remember that bag they dropped? Let's just say that thanks to that little bag there's one less poor sod and his dog on the streets. That little bag gave us the chance to move to the sea, where the air's kinder on my bones. I've even got a job tending this churchyard, and the vicar dotes on Bonnie.

So, you see, it's not my fault is it? Nice talking to you. Told you she didn't bite.