

HAWAJSKI SZTYLET

HAWAIIAN DAGGER



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CHAPTER 1

A HOPELESS SITUATION

Betty Marshall was exhausted; she felt pain all through her body. All day she had been wandering the streets of London until it got dark and a cold winter night with heavy rain and high wind started.

When she was passing a small restaurant, the smell of soup reminded her that she had not eaten anything for forty eight hours. She wrapped her coat around herself, put on a hat and continued walking.

She headed for the Thames. The neighborhood was rather unpleasant, dark and scary. She didn't have a penny in her pocket and felt really frustrated. She stopped on the bridge near the bank of the river and looked at the water below her feet. She heard a melody coming from a pub nearby, a song about a sailor who had never come back from his voyage and left beautiful girls in tears.

Yes, in London of that time there were beautiful girls crying, but not because of their lovers. They were crying because they were hungry and cold and didn't have a place to stay for the night.

"Two thousand nurses are unemployed in this town," it was the only answer she received for the past eight days when she tried to apply for a job in different hospitals.

She heard somebody's footsteps and saw light from a flashlight.

"Are you looking for something, miss?" asked a policeman passing her. "No? Then don't stay here any longer. It's not a safe place for a woman on her own."

She thanked him and crossed the bridge.

Suddenly, she heard footsteps again.

"Madam . . ."

hopeless beznadziejny

exhausted wyczerpany

wander wędrować, tułać się

pass mijać

remind przypominać

wrap owijać

head for udać się w kierunku

neighborhood okolica

scary budzący strach

not have a penny in your pocket

nie mieć grosza przy duszy

bank brzeg

nearby w pobliżu

voyage podróż morską

cry *tu*: płakać

unemployed bezrobotny

receive otrzymać

past ostatnie, minione

apply for ubiegać się o

footsteps kroki

flashlight latarka



She stopped on the bridge near the bank of the river and looked at the water below her feet.

immoral niemoralny

chase pościg

probable prawdopodobny

prevent zapobiec

notice zauważyć

shadow cień

be used to być

przyzwyczajonym do

misjudge źle ocenić

reply odpowiedzieć

sight wzrok

I've been told so tak mi

powiedziano

earn a living zarobić na życie

deed uczynek

kindness dobroć

philanthropist filantrop

offer zaproponować

suspiciously podejrzliwie

contagious zakaźny

mentally umysłowo

instead zamiast

taste smakować

scare wystraszyć

haunted nawiedzony

guess domyślać się

condition warunek

The voice was quiet but pleasant.

“Madam . . .”

She turned back ready for some immoral proposal, decided to give a sharp answer.

“I have been following you for three hours, madam.”

She laughed:

“Well, if you continue this chase, it's highly probable that you will end it with me at the bottom of this river.”

“That is exactly why I am here—to prevent you from doing it.”

Betty Marshall couldn't see the man's face but she noticed his low and broad shadow. She also smelled a good quality cigar.

“I can help you, madam.”

“Thank you. I'm not used to accepting such help,” she answered thinking that she had understood the man's suggestion.

“I'm afraid you have misjudged my intentions,” he said calmly.

“So, go ahead, sir. Explain to me what you want. I can listen to you as well as to the sound of the wind and that awful melody,” she replied laughing again.

“You're a nurse, aren't you?”

“How did you know that?”

“You are dressed in a nurse's uniform.”

“Oh, yes . . . I'd forgotten. But you have very good sight, sir.”

“I know, I've been told so before, madam.”

Betty felt more comfortable.

“I'm listening, then. If you help me earn a living and find somewhere to stay, you will do a good deed.”

“I want to help you, but don't believe in my kindness. I'm not a philanthropist. I want to offer you a job.”

“When, sir?”

“Well . . . now.”

“No problem. Where?”

“I will take you there.”

“There are many unemployed nurses in London,” she said suspiciously.

“I know, but none of them would agree to come to the house I'm thinking of. She would have to be in a hopeless situation, like you.”

“I see . . . It must be some contagious illness.”

“No, not at all. The man who you will be taking care of is mentally ill instead. You will have to give him salt water and tobacco juice or anything else that tastes awful and looks like medicine. The rest is not important.”

“I don't understand . . .”

“The patient didn't scare other nurses. It's the house. It's haunted . . .”

Betty laughed for the third time, more honestly and happily.

“That's very interesting, sir. I don't believe in ghosts. And I guess I will never believe in them.”

“Not if you live in this house.”

“Then I will send an article about it to a metaphysical magazine.”

“I'm afraid you won't be able to do that because the first condition of the job is to keep everything that you see in this haunted house

a secret. The pay is good—one pound per week. The house is old and not very comfortable but your room is cozy and warm. There are no maids, only an old housekeeper who is half deaf and half blind. She will do the shopping for you as you will not be allowed to leave the house.”

“You’re offering me heaven on earth, Sir!”

“Hmm . . . If heaven is a place where you sleep in a bed, in a warm room and eat as much as you want.”

“Perhaps it is true . . .”

“You don’t have any family or friends, Miss Marshall?”

“Oh, my God. You are so well-informed!” she cried, a bit scared.

“That’s good. You won’t go out to visit anybody and you will not write letters.”

“It’s a bit strange . . .”

“You can take it or leave it,” the man said sharply, showing her in this way that the conversation was over and that he would like to receive an answer.

The girl hesitated but she felt the cold wind blowing through her clothes and noticed waves on the dark water of the river.

“Let it be!” she said quietly. “I agree.”

“Thank you. Follow me, please. We have to cross the bridge. My car is parked on the other side.”

They walked for fifteen minutes but did not say a word to each other. The man was two steps ahead of her. She heard his short and heavy breath, which probably meant that he wasn’t young. She hoped to see him clearly in the light from lamps on the bridge but he was wearing a hat and additionally the collar of his coat completely covered his face.

He stopped in front of his car and opened its door with a key. He told her to get in.

When she sat in the soft seat and smelled the petrol, she thought that finally she had found a safe place.

The man sat behind the steering wheel and started the car.

“Where are we going?” she asked.

“You know where!”

“But in which direction?”

“It doesn’t matter to you, but I still can take you back to the bridge,” he said impatiently.

Betty was silent. They drove along crowded streets. She stopped guessing which part of London they were going to but she knew for sure they were heading for the suburbs.

After some time she saw a long low grey wall with tree branches hanging over it.

The car slowed down and the driver beeped the horn: three times short, one long . . .

“The letter ‘V’ in Morse code,” she thought automatically.

The car lights lit for a moment the front wall of the house and she saw a picture of a dagger carved above the entrance door.

The man turned to her:

“You still have a chance to change your mind, madam,” he said slowly.

Betty Marshall felt such pleasure caused by the warmth inside the

cozy przytulny

maid służąca

housekeeper gosposia

deaf głuchy

blind ślepy

you will not be allowed nie będzie ci wolno

cry *tu*: krzyknąć

You can take it or leave it

Decydujesz się albo nie

be over skończyć się

hesitate wahać się

blow (blew, blown) wiać

Let it be! Niech tak będzie!

to each other do siebie

step krok

ahead of przed

breath oddech

mean (meant, meant) znaczyć

collar kołnierz

steering wheel kierownica

doesn’t matter nie ma znaczenia

impatiently niecierpliwie

be silent milczeć

guess zgadywać

suburbs przedmieścia

branch gałąź

beep the horn naciśnąć klakson

dagger sztylet

carved wyrzeźbiony

entrance door drzwi wejściowe

cause spowodować

warmth ciepło

whisper szeptać

regret żałować

stranger obca osoba

farewell żegnaj

badly lit słabo oświetlony

step in wejść do środka

realize zdać sobie sprawę

terrify przerażać

turn the knob nacisnąć klamkę

trapped w pułapce

towards w kierunku, w stronę

wrinkled pomarszczony

stare gapić się

beg błagać

suicide samobójstwo

commit popełnić

sin grzech

huge olbrzymi

president przewodniczący,
prezes

support wspierać

nod kiwnąć potakująco głową

seem wydawać się

car that she wouldn't be able to go back to the cold bank of the river.

"I have already agreed," she whispered.

"Very good, madam. I believe you will not regret it."

"Will I ever see you again?" she asked suddenly. "Please, don't forget that I will be alone here among strangers . . ."

The man hesitated.

"Perhaps, Miss Marshell. If you ever need anything, ask the housekeeper for the doctor. That will be enough."

"Thank you, Doctor . . ."

He laughed quietly.

"You can call me Doctor," he said. "It's as good as any other name. Now, I wish you all the best and farewell."

He opened the car door and helped her get out.

She saw stairs and a badly lit hall behind the open door. As soon as she stepped in, the door closed before she realized what was going on. Suddenly, terrified she turned back and turned the knob. The door was locked. She was trapped.

She heard somebody coming towards her . . .

CHAPTER 2

THE TERROR OF NURSES

"That's the sixth one this month!"

Mrs. Hinchcliff, a doctor and the head of the nursing school in London, was sitting on a chair which Tom Wills, the detective's assistant, had placed for her in front of Harry Dickson's desk.

Her face was wrinkled. She looked tired. She was staring at the detective, begging him for help.

"Police doctors say that they were suicides," said Harry Dickson.

"I can't believe it, sir," the woman replied. "All those girls were very religious and committing suicide, even when you are desperate, is a sin."

"Unemployment among nurses is huge," the detective said quietly. "And I believe nothing has been done to change this situation."

"Unfortunately, it's true, sir. Our schools give out too many diplomas and our hospitals do not have enough jobs for the nurses. My organization has a limited budget and we can't ask our president, Sir Burland, for more money. When I told him that I wanted to meet you and talk about these tragic deaths, he promised to come with me and support us."

Harry Dickson nodded his head: Sir Burland was a well-known doctor, whom the detective had already met several times. He came back to the main subject of their meeting:

"All of the dead nurses have been found in the Thames river. Is that right, Mrs. Hinchcliff?"

The doctor seemed terrified:

"Poor girls!" she cried.

"Do you think that there have been others?"