

CHAPTER ONE

Another lovely day

Suddenly he was awake. He could see the light through the curtains. Tina was still sleeping beside him. That was strange. They always woke up together. He looked at his watch. Six thirty. He tried to think. Yes, they always woke up at exactly eight o'clock. He couldn't remember waking up before eight . . . not ever. Why not? Everybody in the city woke up at exactly eight o'clock. Every day.

He got out of bed quietly. Tina didn't move. He walked to the window and opened the curtains. He looked out at the quiet city. Nothing was moving. Then he dressed quickly, and went to the chair and sat down. He had to think. He had to remember. He was still sitting there an hour and a half later when Tina opened her eyes.

'Dan,' she said, 'Dan, what are you doing?'

'I got up early,' he said. Early. It sounded strange. But why did it sound strange?

'Dan, is anything wrong?'

'Wrong? No, nothing's wrong. I just wanted to get up, that's all.'

Tina dressed. She smiled brightly. 'It's time for breakfast,' she said. 'Come on, we mustn't be late.'

'Wh ...?' He was going to say, 'Why not?' But he didn't. He stood up. 'Yes, yes, it's time for breakfast. Look, you go down for breakfast. I'm not hungry today. I'll see you later.'

Tina looked at him. 'We have to go to breakfast. Are you feeling ill? I'll call the doctor.'

The doctor. Yes, he had to go to breakfast. He didn't want to see the doctor. Tina was standing by the door. She looked annoyed.

'Tina,' he said, 'I didn't eat anything yesterday, or the day before. And I feel different.'

Tina moved towards the phone. 'Of course you feel different, Dan. You are ill. I'll get the doctor.'

'Don't phone, Tina . . . please,' he said. 'I wanted to feel hungry. I haven't felt hungry for ... for a long time. I wanted to remember the feeling.'

She looked worried. 'I don't understand,' she said. 'Nobody wants to feel hungry.'

'That's it. Nobody wants to feel hungry. Nobody wants to feel unhappy, nobody wants to feel anything. Yesterday and the day before, I didn't eat. Nobody noticed. I threw the food away . . . and now I'm beginning to remember things. I think there's something in the food, a drug. Because of the drug

we can't remember things.'

Tina's face was red. 'You're crazy,' she said quietly.

'Maybe,' he said, 'but why can't we remember anything? What is this place?'

'It's ... our home,' she said slowly.

'Our home? When did we come here?'

'Er ... I don't know, Dan. Is it important?'

'Where were we before we came here?' He shook her arm angrily. 'Why did we come here?'

"We ... we ... Oh, Dan, I can't remember. Don't worry about it. Look, don't be silly. We're going to be very busy today. First there's the pottery class. You'll be able to finish making that bowl. Then we're going to go swimming, then lunch. Then we can lie beside the swimming pool before tennis, then there's dinner. Then we can watch the new videos in the video room, have a drink and go to bed. We'll be exhausted!"

'Exhausted? At eight o'clock?'

'Well, yes. That's bedtime. We need twelve hours sleep a night. Everybody says that.'

'Tina, how long have we been here?'

'I don't know, Dan.'

'We call this place "home". Don't you remember? We used to call it "a holiday". We used to call this "our hotel room". Now we call it "home".'

'I don't remember that. That's stupid.'

'No, it isn't, Tina. I remembered this morning, when I woke up early.'

'Perhaps you didn't wake up, Dan. Perhaps you had a dream. A strange dream, that's all.'

'But I did wake up, Tina. You saw me. I was sitting in that chair - with all my clothes on.'

'I'm not sure. Were you? I can't remember now.' She smiled at him. 'Come on, the sun's shining. It's another beautiful day. Let's go and have breakfast.'

She opened the door. Dan looked at her for a moment. 'You've forgotten our conversation, haven't you?' he said. 'You've forgotten it already.'

CHAPTER TWO

I love breakfast

Dan followed her into the corridor. He looked at the rows of doors on both sides. They were all the same. They walked along to the lift. Tina pushed the button, and the doors opened.

'Morning, Tina, morning, Dan.' Russell, the sports organizer, was already in the lift. He smiled. 'I hope you're both ready for the tennis match,' he said. 'We're playing Level Fourteen this afternoon. They've got some good players.'

Tina laughed. 'Level Five, Level Five,' she sang, 'Level Five is really alive!' It was their team song.

The liftthe long line of people. They were all waiting for breakfast. Dan looked around. Everyone was wearing shorts and T-shirts, the men and the women.

Dan looked down at his T-shirt. It was light blue, the Level Five colour. His shorts were light blue too. There were different colours for all the levels. The man in front of him was wearing a yellow Level Nine T-shirt.

'Oh, good!' said Tina. 'Cornflakes. I love cornflakes.'

'So do I,' said Russell.

Dan smiled. Every day breakfast was cornflakes with thin milk. Every day Tina seemed pleased with it. She always seemed pleased with lunch too. And dinner. Everybody seemed pleased. He thought about the food. Lunch was usually soup, and some bread. Dinner was usually soup, and some kind of rice. They sometimes had a little meat or fish, but not often. But they were never hungry.

Dan took a tray, a bowl of cornflakes and a vitamin drink. He followed Tina and Russell towards the tables. The restaurant had big windows, and through them you could see the large swimming pool. The families with children all lived on the other side of the pool. On this side there were only people without children. Dan stopped and thought, 'And none of us ever have children. And the youngest children on the other side are ten or eleven years old. They used to be younger.' He could remember babies. 'So, no children are born here, and the youngest children are ten or eleven.' Dan waited for a moment. He put his tray down on an empty table. It was difficult. Thinking was difficult. 'So, maybe that's how long we've been here. Ten or eleven years.' He felt pleased with himself. He looked around quickly. Nobody was watching him. He picked up his tray again and walked over to the waste disposal unit. Quickly he threw the food and drink away. He looked around again. No, nobody saw him. He started to walk to Tina's table. 'And there are no sick people,' he thought. They take them to a hospital

somewhere. Nobody else leaves. Never.' He stopped. There was Jack! Jack went to hospital . . . but when? He walked over to Jack's table.

'Jack! Good morning,' he said.

'Good morning, Dan. Lovely day, isn't it?'

'How's your leg, Jack? Is it better?'

Jack looked surprised. 'My leg? There's nothing wrong with my leg.'

'Don't you remember, Jack? You hurt your leg. You cut it by the swimming pool. I was with you. You fell on a bottle and it broke, and cut you badly. They took you to hospital. You went in a helicopter.'

Jack stopped eating. He looked worried for a moment. Then he laughed. 'I've never been to hospital in my life,' he said. 'And I've never been in a helicopter. Is this a joke?'

Dan looked down. Jack was wearing green Level Eleven shorts. He could see the long red scar on Jack's leg. He looked at Jack again. Jack was smiling.

'Dan, are you all right?' It was Russell. He was standing behind him.

'I was just talking to Jack. About his leg. He cut his leg when we were at the swimming pool. Look, there's the scar. You remember, Russell. He fell on a bottle. You carried him

to the helicopter.'

Russell wasn't smiling. 'Dan, can you come to my office after breakfast? I want to talk to you.'

Dan looked at Russell carefully. Russell was the sports organizer for Level Five. There were a lot of organizers. They all lived on the highest level of the building, Level Twenty. There were organizers for sports, pottery, yoga, music, everything.

'No, I can't come to your office, Russell. I'm busy.'

Russell looked surprised. 'Busy? What do you mean?'

Dan turned and walked quickly out of the restaurant. He walked to the lifts. He got to the lifts, pushed the button, and the door opened immediately. Dan stepped in. Russell was hurrying along the corridor towards him. Dan pushed a button, and the doors closed. Dan looked at the buttons. There were twenty levels. He pushed number twenty.

CHAPTER THREE

The twentieth level

Sunnyvista City was built on both sides of a deep valley. The swimming pools and sports areas were at the bottom of the valley. The rooms were against the sides of the valley. At both ends of the valley were the offices for the organizers. The city was about two kilometres long. Helicopters flew into the city every day. They always landed on the roof of the twentieth level.

The lift stopped. Dan walked out. The corridor was empty. The rooms were bigger here. There was a bigger distance between the doors. Then he heard a noise. It was a bell. The door of the next lift was opening. Dan stepped back. Russell was coming out of the lift door.

'Dan,' said Russell, 'what are you doing? This is Level Twenty. You shouldn't be here.'

'Why not?' said Dan. 'And why are you following me?'

'I must speak to you,' said Russell. 'It's important.'

Dan looked at Russell. Russell was looking at the wall next to the lift. There was a red button on the wall. Russell

was moving towards the button. Dan stepped between Russell and the button. 'OK,' said Dan. 'Where shall we talk?'

Russell looked worried. 'Er . . . we can go to my office. We can talk there.'

Dan thought for a moment. Russell was bigger than Dan, and stronger too. Dan thought about the sports in Sunnyvista City. Nobody tried to win . . . not ever. Why not? He could remember the day before when he played tennis against Russell. Dan tried to win. He wanted to win. Russell was surprised then. Dan smiled, 'Come on, let's go to your office. I mustn't be late for the pottery class. I'm making a bowl, a soup bowl. Have you seen it?'

Russell smiled. 'No, I haven't. You can show me later.'

Dan stepped into the lift, and Russell followed him. Russell turned to the row of buttons next to the door. 'Level One,' he said to himself and moved his hand towards the button. Dan hit him once, hard on the back of the head. Russell fell to the floor.

'I knocked him out,' thought Dan. 'I hit him once and knocked him out. Where did I learn that?' There were never fights in Sunnyvista City. Nobody was ever angry. Dan looked at the buttons. He pushed the button for Level Ten. There was nobody on Level Ten at this time of the morning. He stepped quickly through the door before it closed.

CHAPTER FOUR

On the roof

Dan walked along the corridor. There were some stairs at the end. He ran up the stairs. There was a door at the top. He pushed the door, and it opened. It wasn't locked! He went through the door, and he was on the roof.

He looked around. A large helicopter was standing on the roof. Dan stopped and looked at it for a moment. The helicopter was a Westing Type 23. He thought for a moment. The Westing Type 23 had twenty seats, two engines and it could fly at 300 kilometres an hour. But how did he know that? He tried to remember. Of course! He used to work at a helicopter factory. He used to make Westing helicopters. He used to work! But when was that? And where? Why did he stop working? And why did he come to Sunnyvista City? Dan walked across the roof. It was very wide. He walked to the side and looked over the wall at Sunnyvista City. Then he walked across to the other side and looked over that wall. He shook his head. There was another valley with more buildings. It looked exactly the same as Sunnyvista City. There was a door on the other side with a notice on it, 'Sortie'. He tried to think. 'Sortie', it was French. It meant 'exit'. But when did he learn French? He turned and

ran over to the helicopter. The door was open. There were a lot of boxes inside. They were empty.

Dan climbed in, and hid behind the boxes. There was writing on the boxes. One said 'Sunnyvista City', another said 'Club du Soleil', a third said 'Playa del Sol'. He thought about the writing. English, French and Spanish. He looked at some more boxes. Some were German, some were Italian. One was Portuguese. He sat there for about ten minutes, then he heard voices. The door closed. Two men got into the front of the helicopter. Dan listened.

'Well, that's it. We've delivered everything to the English and French sections.'

'Yes, we can do the German and Italian sections this afternoon.'

CHAPTER FIVE

Dan remembers more

The engines started and he couldn't hear anything else. The helicopter took off and climbed slowly into the sky. Dan moved quietly to the window and looked down. He could see more valleys like Sunnyvista City, then more and more. They flew over the valleys for half an hour. Then Dan could see fields and trees and farms. In the distance he could see a town with factories and smoke. The helicopter began to go down. Dan hid behind the boxes again. The helicopter landed, and the door opened. Some men began to move the boxes. Dan stood up. 'Hello,' he said. 'Where are we?'

The men looked at each other. They didn't speak. Another man climbed into the helicopter.

'It's all right,' he said to the men, 'it's just another one from the valleys.' He looked at Dan. 'Why have you come here?'

'I don't know. I started to remember things. I wanted to remember more,' said Dan.

'You've come from Sunnyvista City, haven't you?' said

the man.'

'Yes,' said Dan.

'Hmm, I see. I think you should come with me.'

Dan followed the man out of the helicopter.

'My name's Travis,' said the man. 'Come on, we'll go to my office.'

Dan looked around. They were at a small airport. He could see nine or ten helicopters, two large planes, and a lot of trucks. The helicopters were all Westing 23's. Men were putting boxes into them. There were fields around the airport, and a small road going towards the town in the distance.

Travis took Dan to a small building. They went inside. Travis led him into a small untidy office. Dan looked around. In Sunnyvista City everything was always in the right place. Nothing was untidy or dirty.

'Sit down,' said Travis. 'Would you like something to drink? I've got tea or coffee.'

'Er... no, thank you,' said Dan.

Travis laughed. 'Don't worry,' he said. 'There's nothing in it. I'm sure you're hungry and thirsty. Very hungry and very thirsty.'

'How do you know that?' said Dan.

Travis sat down. They always are hungry and thirsty. That's why they're here. Look, don't worry. Sunnyvista City isn't a prison, you know. When the helicopter took off, the pilots knew there was somebody there. They knew because of the extra weight.'

'Why didn't they take me back?' asked Dan.

'I've told you. It isn't a prison. You got into the helicopter because you wanted to leave. That's OK. You've left. We didn't stop you.'

Dan looked at the table for a moment. 'There was a man, one of the sports organizers. His name's Russell. He wanted to stop me. I knocked him out. I left him in the lift, and sent the lift down to Level Ten. I didn't want to hurt him.'

'He's OK. You didn't hurt him badly. I spoke to him on the telephone a few minutes ago.'

'What is Sunnyvista City?' asked Dan. What is it really?'

'How much can you remember?' said Travis.

'I'm beginning to remember more and more. I can't remember everything yet.'

'You'll remember more tomorrow,' said Travis.

'Well,' said Dan. 'I used to work in a helicopter factory in

England, the Westing factory. This isn't England, is it?

'No,' said Travis, 'it isn't.'

'I lost my job,' said Dan. The factory closed. I was unemployed for a long time. Then I saw an advertisement. It was on television, I think. It was for very cheap, thirty-day holidays for the unemployed. Very cheap. We left England, and flew to Sunnyvista City. I can't remember much since then. But I remember something. I haven't seen or talked about money for years.'

Travis smiled. 'Sunnyvista City is one of the oldest towns here. It opened ten years ago. You haven't seen money for ten years.'

'But what's happening?' said Dan.

'Can you remember ten years ago? There were millions of unemployed people all over the world. There was very little work. Computers were doing everything. There was fighting in the streets - riots, revolutions, hunger. The governments all over the world had a meeting, a secret meeting. They built Sunnyvista City, and hundreds of places like it. All of them are in warm, sunny places near the sea. They sent unemployed people on "holidays". They give everyone drugs in the food. There is no hunger, no fighting, no children in the cities. There is also no memory. Nobody can remember anything. Everyone lives for today.'

'But that's terrible,' said Dan.

'Is it? Is it really?' said Travis. Things were much worse before.'

'Are you going to send me back there?' asked Dan.

'You can choose. We can give you a drug. You'll wake up tomorrow in Sunnyvista City, and you won't remember anything about this.'

'You said I can choose,' said Dan.

'Yes. You can stay here. You can go back to England. We'll find you a job. Life will be difficult. You'll have to work hard, and ...'

'But I'll be free,' said Dan.

'Yes, you will. A few people . . . only one or two per cent. . . leave Sunnyvista City and the other cities every year. That isn't a problem. We can find jobs for those people. Most people are happy there. About half of the people that leave choose to go back.'

'I don't believe it,' said Dan.

'You will. Maybe next year you'll want to go back. It's an easy life. But what about now? Are you going back, or are you staying here?'

Dan sat back in his seat and smiled. 'I think I'll stay here,' he said.