

THE LOCKED ROOM

by Peter Viney

Chapter I. Where am I?

Where am I? I don't know. I am in a beautiful room in an old house. There's a bed, an expensive chair and a beautiful table. I can't see anything from the window. Only a green field. The sun is shining on the field. I can hear music, quiet music. It's Mozart. Why am I here? I don't know. Oh, my head is hurting. I can't open the door and I can't open the window. I am wearing grey trousers and a grey shirt. I am not wearing any shoes. I am hungry and I am thirsty. There isn't any food in the room, there isn't a drink either. There is a pen and some paper on the table. There is not anything on the paper. Who am I? I can't remember, I can't remember my name. I can't remember anything. Oh, my head hurts a lot. I am very tired. I am going to sleep.

It's morning. I am on the bed. I am wearing the grey clothes. I am very hungry. I am very thirsty. I can hear music again. It's the Mozart again. My head doesn't hurt now. But I can't remember my name. I can't remember anything. I can hear someone. There is someone outside the room. The door is opening. He is in the room. He is wearing black trousers and a black shirt. I don't know him.

-Hello, how is your head?

-My head? It's ok, it doesn't hurt now.

- Good!

- Where am I?

- You don't know?

- No.

- Are you thirsty?

- Yes, I'm hungry and thirsty.

- Drink this!

He's got a glass in his hand. I drink from the glass. Oh, I'm very tired again. I'm going to sleep.

What time is it? My head's hurting again. I am on the bed and the room is dark. I can't hear music now. I am going to turn on the light. Now I can see. There's a glass on the table. I am thirsty again. I am going to drink from the glass. Sleep. I am going to s...

- Wake up!

- What? Oh, my head.

- I am going to ask you some questions. Who're you?

- I don't know.

- What's your name?

- I don't know.

- I am going to ask you again, what's your name?

- I can't tell you, I don't know.

- Where are you from?

- I don't know.

- Drink this!
- No, I can't, this...
- You're going to drink it, do you understand?

There is a gun in his hand, I drink from the glass. The room is dark.

Chapter II. Questions.

I am awake again. It's quiet outside. The sun is shining outside the window. There is food and water on the table. I am not tired now. And my head's ok. Someone is coming. The door opens. It's the man in black clothes.

- Do you want to talk now?
- What about?
- Ok, who're you?
- Who are you?!
- I am asking the questions, why are you here?
- You tell me!

Then he hits me. He hits me across the face.

- We're going to start again, who're you?
- I can't remember, don't hit me!

But he does. Then he opens the door and he goes. There is a bump on the back of my head. It doesn't hurt now. But my face hurts. A bump, I can remember something. I can remember. I'm in a field. I am lying under a tree. I've got some binoculars in my hand. I am watching a house. It's a beautiful old house. Then there's a noise behind me. It's a man with a dog, a big dog. The man's holding a gun.

Then the man is hitting me. He is hitting me on the head with the gun. Then everything is going dark. I've got a bump on my head now. Why? Why am I in that field? Who am I? Am I a policeman? Am I a spy? And who is the man? Is he a policeman? Is he a spy? Or is he a criminal? I don't know but now I can remember something. Tomorrow, tomorrow I am going to remember some more.

Chapter III. No more time.

The next day. The man in black clothes is in the room again.

- Well, how're you today?
- I'm ok.
- Can you remember anything?
- Yes, a little.
- Who're you working for?
- I don't know.
- Why are you watching us?
- I don't know. Who're you? Tell me! Then maybe I can remember.
- Very clever. I can't tell you anything.

He goes out. I remember again. I am watching the house. It's evening. I'm wearing a blue coat. There're lights in the house. A car is going to the house. It's a white jaguar. I am watching carefully. I can see two

people. They've got a box. Then there's the noise behind me and a bump on my head. It's dark. I can hear voices outside the room.

- Well, is he going to talk?
- Maybe. He can't remember anything because of the bump on his head.
- What about the drinks?
- No. the drinks aren't helping us.
- Ok, two days more and that's it. We haven't got any more time. How much does he know? That's the important thing.

Chapter IV. Out of the locked room.

I hear a key. They are putting the key into the lock. They're turning the key. They are locking the door. They are walking away. But the key is in the lock. Two days more and that's it. What're they going to do? I can't stay here. The key is in the lock. I've got some paper from the table. Now put the paper on the floor, push the paper under the door. The paper is under the door. Now take the pen, push the pen into the lock. Yes, there is the key. It's in the lock. Push the key with the pen. Yes, the key is falling from the lock. Is it on the paper? Oh, I don't know. Pull the paper under the door. Pull it slowly and carefully. Very slowly and very carefully. It's coming under the door. And there is the key. It's on the paper. I've got the key. I can open the door.

It's quiet outside. I am opening the door very quietly and carefully. There's a corridor, it's empty. I am going out. Now I am going to lock the door again and take the key. I am walking along the corridor. It's a beautiful house. I can hear the music again. The Mozart. There're a lot of doors. At the end I can see stairs, I can hear people downstairs. I can't go down. I open some doors, there're bedrooms. I open four or five doors. Then I open another door. The room is full of paintings. Famous paintings. Picassos, Rembrandts, Van Goghs. Oh, they are beautiful. They are on the floor. There're millions of pounds in the room. Millions! I look at the Picasso. It's the famous stolen Picasso from the London Art Gallery. Who're they? They're art thieves. But who am I? I close the door. How can I get out of this house? They've got guns. I remember. One of the bedrooms. There's a telephone. I can telephone the police. I walk quickly along the corridor and open the door. The telephone is next to the bed. The number is on the telephone. Brad Str. 35972. I take the telephone carefully. 999. I am waiting.

-Police, fire or ambulance?

- Police, quickly.

- Police, what's your number? Brad Str. 35972, quickly I am a prisoner here. I can't get out. The house is full of stolen paintings. Come quickly.

- What's your name?

- Come quickly. This is Brad Str. 35972. I can't...

Then I hear people in the corridor. I put down the phone. I can hear them outside the locked room.

- Well, open the door then.

- I can't find the key.

- Come on!

- I can't find it.

- There's another key in the kitchen. Get it!
- Right!

Chapter V. Who am I?

Five minutes later. I can hear him again. He's coming with the key. He's opening the door. What? He isn't here. Well, but the door's locked. Find him and take your gun. And this time finish him. Do you understand? Ok, I am going.

I can hear him. He is opening doors. Are the police going to come or not? He is in the next room. Then I hear them, police cars, a lot of police cars. They're outside the house. It's the police, what do they want? Don't take the gun with you! They're going downstairs. I can hear voices.

- Good evening, inspector. What can I do for you?
- We want to look round the house. We're looking for some paintings.
- But there's nothing here. Nothing!
- We can look then.
- But why?
- A telephone call. A telephone call about some paintings.
- Who from?
- We don't know.
- You don't know? Well...
- It's me, inspector, the paintings are up here. I can show you, follow me.

It's ten minutes later. The man and the woman are in the police cars.

- Well, Eddy, this is a surprise.
- Eddy, is that my name?
- Eddy, come on.
- No, I can't remember. You can't remember me?
- I can't remember my name. Eddy... Eddy what?
- Eddy Hampton. What're you doing here, Eddy?

I tell him. I tell him about the field and the binoculars. I tell him about the bump on my head and the room. I tell him about the paper and the key. He's laughing at me.

- Ok, I'm Eddy Hampton but who is Eddy Hampton?

He's laughing again.

- You know me. Am I a policeman?
- No, Eddy, you aren't a policeman.
- Then who am I and what am I doing here?
- I don't know but I can tell you something.
- What?
- Eddy Hampton is a criminal. A thief, not a big thief, those two people are big thieves with their famous paintings. No, you are a small thief, Eddy, you steal from houses, televisions, radios, videos, Hi-Fis, a little money sometimes. You're a small thief, but thank you for your help.