

## Part 2

He really thought he must be dreaming, for this sunrise time was the hour for dreams. Then, when he knew he wasn't, he decided it must be a **stunt**. This was to be a scene in a film. There were cameramen down there, a whole film unit, and all the correct safety precautions had been taken. Probably the girl wasn't even a real girl, but a **dummy**. He opened the window and looked down. The car park, paved courts, grass spaces between the blocks, all were **deserted**. On the balcony rail one of the dummy's hands moved, **clutching** its anchorage more tightly, more desperately. He had to believe then what was obviously happening – unbelievable only because melodrama, though a frequent constituent of real life, always is. The girl was trying to kill herself. She had lost her **nerve** and now was trying to stay alive. All these thoughts and conclusions of his occupied about thirty seconds. Then he acted. He picked up the phone and dialled the emergency number for the police.

The arrival of the police cars and the rescue of the girl became the focus of **gossip** and speculation for the tenants of the two blocks. Someone found out that it was he who had **alerted** the police and he became an unwilling hero. He was a modest, quiet young man, and, disliking this **limelight**, was relieved when the talk began to die away, when the novelty of it **wore off**, and he was able to enter and leave his flat without being pointed at as a kind of St. George and sometimes even congratulated.

About a fortnight after that morning of melodrama, he was getting ready to go to the theatre, just putting on his overcoat, when the doorbell rang. He didn't recognize the girl who stood outside. He had never seen her face.

She said, 'I'm Lydia Simpson. You saved my life. I've come to thank you.'

### 3 3.6 Listen to and read Part 2.

- 1 What is the man's first interpretation of what he sees?
- 2 What is his second interpretation? How does he know it's wrong?
- 3 What is his third interpretation? What does he do?
- 4 How do other tenants react?
- 5 Why is he an 'unwilling hero'? What do you learn about his character?
- 6 What happened two weeks later?
- 7 Why doesn't he recognize the person at the door?

### 4 3.7 Listen *only* to Part 3 of the story.

- 1 How does the man feel as she talks? What does he say?
- 2 What does he want her to do?
- 3 What *doesn't* he want to happen?
- 4 How does he feel as she goes? How does she seem?

## Vocabulary

5 Match the **highlighted** words in the text with a synonym or near synonym from below.

a dangerous act	holding tightly	disappearing
woken up	look (noun)	empty
chat	a model	faded
informed	attention	courage

## What do you think?

- Why is it 'curious' that they meet the next morning?
- What do you think happens at the bus stop? Do they get to know each other? Go out together?
- The writer doesn't ever give the man a name. Why not?
- Here are some lines from the rest of the story.

*"My life has been yours ever since you saved it."*

*"We don't need children to bring us together. You're my husband and my child and my friend all in one."*

The first thing he noticed when he let himself in at his front door at six was the stench of gas.

*"How long," she asked dully, "will you be gone?"*

*"Three months." She paled. She fell back as if physically ill.*

*... she had been lying there, the empty bottle of pills still clutched feebly in her hand.*

6 Discuss what you think happens? Look at page 165 and read a synopsis of the story. Why is *The Clinging Woman* a clever title?

 **Watch** a video and learn more about the creative writing process from an author.

