

# Stalked

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- Being stalked by a woman and not being able to **handle** it, that's bad enough, but... I went home with Miranda. I don't know why. I suppose I thought I should. I couldn't get it up for her. She was beautiful and all that, but I just couldn't. I've
- 5 had some trouble in that department over the years...'  
 'You're not Robinson Crusoe.'  
 'What? Oh, yeah, but nothing like this. It was **miserable**.'  
 'Do I have to ask the obvious question?'  
 'No. With Jane everything is wonderful. Amazing, really. But Miranda, or
- 10 whoever she is, has threatened to harm Jane. To physically hurt her. And she says she'll tell her I'm really gay and that I'm just using her as a...'  
 'Beard, the Americans call it.'  
 'Do they? Okay. She says she knows I'm not and that she can fix my problem, but she says she's so hurt that's what she'd do.'
- 15 'Unless?'  
 'Unless I agree to see her, respond to her messages and emails, go on a holiday with her, all that.'  
 'These threats come how?'  
 'Emails, letters, cards, phone calls.'
- 20 He handed me the other photograph. It showed a young woman sitting in a chair smiling shyly at the camera. She had **curly, cropped** hair, a **pug** nose and slightly **droopy eyes**. She wore a **blouse** and a skirt that covered her knees. Forrest **cleared his throat**.
- 'Jane isn't beautiful, as you can see, but that doesn't matter to me. She's
- 25 wonderful and I love her, but because I look the way I do... shit, I hate saying this.'
- 'She feels she's not good enough for you while you feel you're not good enough for her.'
- He had large, expressive blue eyes like Mel Gibson and he opened them wide.
- 30 'That's it exactly. I can't bear the thought of losing her or of any harm coming to her because of me.'
- 'Tell me about the threats to Jane.'
- 'They're kind of veiled, I suppose you'd call it. Nothing like "I'll throw acid in her face" or like that. But she says how people can have accidents, how they
- 35 can **contract** diseases by being in the wrong place at the wrong time. She says she knows people who can **arrange** things and how Sydney is such a dangerous city.'
- 'Nothing direct?'
- 'No.'
- 40 'And you believe she's capable of **carrying out** these threats?'
- 'That's the trouble, I don't know. But I can't afford to take the risk. I'm embarrassed about all this. The only person I've been able to talk to about it was my dad. Can you help me?'
- It didn't feel like such a big deal. It was a reversal of the usual stalker **scenario**,
- 45 but what could I expect? It was the twenty-first century, change was everywhere. Bobby said he'd been back to Miranda's flat but she wasn't there. He felt too angry to reply to her emails or phone calls because he was worried she might record him saying something he shouldn't. He mentioned his **bad temper**. He

wanted me to find Miranda and talk to her. Persuade her that the **course** she  
 50 was following would only get her into serious trouble.  
 'Would you **take legal action**?'  
 He finished his drink as he thought about it. 'I'd **be reluctant**. It'd be  
 embarrassing and Jane would find out all about it. But Dad says you're good  
 at **getting through to** people. If you thought she was serious about the threats  
 55 and wouldn't listen, then yes, I'd take legal action.'  
 That was sensible. He was smarter than he thought.  
 I had him sign a contract and pay over a **retainer**. I asked him for more details  
 on how the particular dating website he'd used worked and he **filled me in**.  
 I took notes. I got his email address and his postal address, his **landline** and his  
 60 mobile number.  
 Jane's surname was Devereaux and I got her details, including the **publishing  
 company** she worked for as an **editor**. I got Bobby's agent's details and those  
 for his father. Bobby and I shook hands and he thanked me **profusely**. So far all  
 he'd had was a **sympathetic** ear, and the retainer he'd given me, **in line**  
 65 **with** what I'd learned was the new **scale of fees**, was **steep**. I felt I had to have  
 something to contribute immediately. I asked him if Miranda had given him  
 a deadline for carrying out her threats.  
 'Not exactly, but she **implied** I didn't have long.'  
 'If I have trouble finding her, another way might be for you to contact her and  
 70 arrange to meet. I could step in then.'  
 He looked **dismayed** at the **prospect**, almost angry when I told him that if it  
 came to making contact with Miranda it would be better to do it by phone in  
 case Jane read his emails.  
 'She wouldn't do that.'  
 75 'You never know what a person will do.'  
 The anger **subsided**. A **flush** had come over his face and he'd **gripped** the arms  
 of his chair so that the structure **creaked**. He drew in a deep breath. 'I don't  
 think I could meet her. I think if I did I might...'  
 'Do what?'  
 80 He shook his head and didn't answer.  
 He was suddenly **anxious** to go and I let him. I stared at the closed door and  
 wondered what he'd been going to say. Was it, *I might try to prove my  
 manhood, or I might harm her?*  
 After he left I scanned my notes and the signed contract into the computer and  
 85 created a file for it. I scanned the photos of Miranda and Jane into the computer  
 and made copies. Then I threw the notes away. They say the paperless office  
 didn't happen; I kept the signed contract but otherwise I was prepared to get as  
 close to paperless as I could.  
 Bobby, looking shamefaced, had told me that Miranda's photograph had  
 90 attracted him and her list of interests included acting and several sports he **was  
 keen on**. He'd 'messed' her, got a response and they communicated a few  
 times before arranging a meeting at a wine bar in Coogee. He'd given her his  
 email address and mobile number. Once bitten, he'd been more cautious with  
 Jane and they'd spent more time providing details and filling in backgrounds  
 95 before they'd arranged to meet. He said he hadn't been disappointed by her  
 looks when they met at a coffee shop in Randwick. He described her face as  
 fascinating. She hadn't objected to his intellectual **shortcomings**. He said they'd  
 laughed a lot and at the same sorts of things. He'd agreed to read some books

and she'd agreed to let him teach her to play golf. They went to bed on their  
100 third meeting and hit the jackpot.

## Vocabulary

*Slovička s jednou hvězdičkou stačí znát pasivně, se dvěma hvězdičkami není třeba se učit, jsou zde jen pro porozumění textu.*

handle *zvládnout, poradit se, vědět si rady*

miserable *bylo to peklo, deprimující, mizerný*

curly *kudrnatý*

\* cropped *nakrátko sestřižený*

\* pug *mops, pug nose malý široký nos*

\* droopy eyes *oči se svěšenými koutky*

blouse [blaus] *halenka*

clear one's throat *odkašlat si*

contract *nakazit se*

arrange *zařít*

carry out *provést*

scenario [sina.riəu] *scénář*

bad temper *vznětlivost, výbušnost, prudká povaha*

course [ko:s] *směr, postup*

\* take legal action *podniknout právní kroky*

I'd be reluctant *neochotný, zdráhající se* I'd be reluctant *nerad bych*

\* get through to sb *podařit se někomu něco vysvětlit, přesvědčit*

retainer *paušální honorář*

fill sb in *doplnit detaily, podrobnější informace*

landline *pevná linka*

publishing company *nakladatelství*

editor *redaktor(ka)*

\* profusely *mohutně, převelice*

sympathetic *účastný, mající pochopení*

in line with *v souladu s, podle*

\* scale of fees *sazebník*

steep *2, pěkně drahý, mastný 1. příkrý, prudký (svah)*

imply *naznačovat, říkat nepřímě*

dismayed [dis'meid] *zdešený*

prospect *vyhlídka, možnost, že se něco stane*

subside *polevit, opadnout*

\* flush *červeň, ruměnec*

grip *pevně stisknout, sevřít*

creak (za)skřípat, zavrzat

anxious *toužit, nemoci se dočkat*

be keen on *být do něčeho blázen, hodně bavit*

shortcoming *nedostatek, nedokonalost, chyba*