

Episode FOUR

"Christine! Hello!" Takako ran to her friend and they hugged. Christine began to cry.

"Takako, I'm glad you are safe. It's good to see you! I'm so sorry that this has happened."

5 "What is happening Christine? I'm so frightened! Where are we? What did we do wrong?"

Christine wiped her eyes on her sleeve, took Takako's hand in hers and led her to the sofa near the fire. They sat down and looked at each other in disbelief.

10 "I don't know exactly, Takako. I really don't! That man. . ." "You mean that's not your Uncle Jim?"

"No, of course not! Is that what he told you? Well, no wonder you went with him."

15 "Yes. He said that he was your uncle and I asked him how he knew who I was. He said that you had given him my photo."

"I didn't give it to him. He and another man found it in my room at home and took it!"

"What were they doing there?"

20 "I'm not exactly sure, but they weren't invited in. They broke into my apartment, tied me up, put a hood over my head, and told me if I wasn't quiet, my Japanese friend would be in serious trouble. Then they searched the place and got the picture."

"But Christine, where were your parents? Didn't they do anything?"

25 "Unfortunately, they are in Arizona for the winter. I thought I wrote and told you that in my last letter. Anyway, they won't be back for another 3 months. The other problem is, is that they just phoned me this morning and I told them that everything was fine!"

"You mean that you haven't been here long?"

30 "No, just a couple of hours. But as I was saying, Mom and Dad won't be phoning again for another two weeks. I told them that you were arriving tonight and we were planning a 10-day trip through the Rockies. So for the next ten days, no one is expecting to hear from us! I even told my neighbours!"

"What shall we do? Christine, I'm very frightened!"

35 Christine gave Takako another hug. She didn't know what they could do either, but she knew they had to stay calm and try to think of an escape plan. But escape from what?

40 Takako was calmer now, and she looked around the room to see exactly where she was a prisoner. It was a large room, and it looked like part of a large house, perhaps a basement. The fireplace had a fire burning, so it was warm. There seemed to be plenty of wood, too. To the left of the

fireplace there was a kitchenette, with all the modern conveniences: electric kettle, toaster, even a microwave.

45 Beyond the small kitchen Takako could see a bathroom, and what she thought would probably be a bedroom. The sofa was comfortable, and with the fire they really had nothing to complain about, as far as the accommodation was concerned.

Christine made a pot of herbal tea, and the two drank the warm liquid in silence.

50 "There's a bedroom with only a single bed. You can have it for the night. I'm sure you're a lot more tired than I am. I think this couch folds down into a bed, so I'll be fine."

"Thank you, Christine."

55 "No problem. The most important thing for us to do is to get a good night's sleep. Then, whatever happens in the morning, we'll at least be rested. Unfortunately, the windows have bars on them, so we can't try any sort of escape. At least, not tonight."

The two girls got up and began to prepare for bed. Just then there was a knock at the door.

60 "Are you two decent?", said a voice, sounding a lot like 'Uncle Jim'.

Christine replied. "Yes, come in." She added sarcastically: "It's not locked."

Jim poked his head in.

65 "I'm glad to hear that you haven't lost your sense of humour, young lady."

"How could I, having you as our protector?"

70 "Yeah, yeah, OK. Anyway, I thought I'd let you know that we are leaving bright and early tomorrow morning. So be ready to go around 7. It will be just after sunrise. The weatherman promises us lots of sun for our little trip."

"Where are we going tomorrow?"

"That's for me to know and for you to find out. But I can tell you this: be prepared for the thrill of a lifetime. If you ever wanted to fly like a bird, this will be your chance to do it. Sweet dreams."

75 Jim closed the door and the girls could hear him bolt the lock.

Takako looked at Christine with a puzzled expression on her face.

"I don't know what he means by that, Takako. But whatever his plan is, I think it is about time that we tried to spoil it!"