

## Episode FIVE

As promised, Jim came and knocked on their door at precisely 7 o'clock.

Takako and Christine were all packed and ready to go. Jim took one look at their bags and shook his head.

5 "Sorry to tell you, but your baggage limit for this trip is one small 'carry-on' only. Just bring the necessities, and that's all. If all goes well, we shouldn't be more than a couple of days. That is of course, if you cooperate."

10 "And what happens if we don't?", Christine remarked. She obviously didn't like Jim, and given the circumstances, who could blame her?

"Well, let's just say that if anything goes wrong, one of you will pay. Remember, there are two of you, and you must think of the other's well-being."

15 That kept Christine quiet. She didn't want to get Takako into more trouble than she was already in. They shoved their belongings into two small bags and followed Jim out to the car.

20 On their way outside, the girls noted their whereabouts. Takako's hunch from the night before had been right. It WAS a house, and they had been held captive in the basement. The front yard of the bungalow consisted of a large area of grass, with no flowers or ornaments. The driveway was made of gravel. It led to a gate, which was open at the moment. Beyond the grounds there were only open fields for at least a kilometer in every direction, although to the south there was what looked to be a forest. The sun was just coming up. The warmth would be welcome, as the girls stood shivering, watching their breath in the cold morning air. It was then that Jim remembered the violin.

25 "Takako, you forgot your violin. We have to take that with us. Most important."

With those words, Jim walked back into the house to get it.

30 Christine glanced around the front of the house. It seemed that the two girls were alone. Time for action, Christine thought.

She grabbed Takako's arm.

"Come on, Takako. Let's get out of here!"

They started to run down the drive and out the gate. Freedom!

35 "If we can get past the road and into the trees over there, we can hide."

"Jim has a limp. He'll never catch us if we stay away from the roads."

"Great! Faster, Takako!" Christine seemed more determined.

Suddenly, a strange voice came from just behind them.

40 "And where do you two think you're going?"

Immediately the girls halted in their tracks. They turned around to see another man. Christine recognized him as the one who was in her

apartment the day before. It was Jim's accomplice, his partner-in-crime. He was carrying a shotgun, and he didn't seem at all pleased.

45 "Don't think that you'll get away, ladies. We are a long way from help. And besides, I have a car, *AND* a gun. You're on foot."

The girls remained silent. It was useless.

Jim returned, carrying Takako's Yamaha special edition under his arm. He handed it to her.

50 "All right. Into the car. Let's go. No time to lose."

Jim's partner spoke. "Speaking of losing, we nearly lost these two. They were ready to make a run for it. Fortunately, me and Betsy here put a stop to that." He patted his gun.

"Sorry Bob. It won't happen again. But you know what Mr. Mat. . ."

55 "*NO NAMES!* You know the rules! Now they know my name! I'm afraid, *JIM*, that you are getting rather careless in this operation. Maybe the money is blinding you from performing your duties properly. Maybe I should recommend to the boss that I get a *NEW* partner."

60 "Don't threaten me, Bob. You know that I can do a perfectly good job. And we are in this together until the end. There is no turning back now. I had to get the violin, so I did. Everything is OK. Now, can we *GO?*" Jim was finished with this conversation.

65 The girls listened carefully to the argument. Although they didn't understand everything that was being said, they got the idea that these two kidnappers were not exactly seasoned professionals. And they were working for someone else. And for some reason, Takako's violin was part of the whole plan. It was very confusing.

70 Jim hustled the girls into the car, and Bob got in the passenger side in the front. He still had his shotgun at his side. Jim turned around and threw two black ski masks at the girls.

"Remember these? Put them on. We don't want you to know too much."

75 Takako and Christine dutifully pulled the wool covers over their heads. They adjusted the mouth and nose holes to breathe, but of course there were still no holes to see out of. Once again, they felt like captives. Jim started the car, and soon the girls could tell that they were going down the gravel road again. Christine knew which direction they were heading by the sunlight streaming through the window on her left, warming her shoulder. That meant they were going south. And Christine knew that  
80 south was to the United States! Where could they possibly be headed, and why?

## Episode SIX

There was nothing the girls could do about their plight, so they sat back and tried to relax. In the front seat, Jim and Bob remained silent as well,

although they were both smoking cigarettes, by the smell of it. Christine didn't smoke, and it bothered her a bit.

5 The car continued down the gravel road. The girls could feel each curve because they seemed to be bumping each other, either Takako against Christine, or Christine up against Takako.

10 Sometime later the car slowed and turned off the road. The bumps got bigger for the girls, but the car was only crawling along now. It finally stopped, and Jim turned around.

"OK, you two can take those masks off now."

15 Bob was already out of the car when the girls' eyes had adjusted to the sunlight. He was about 50 meters ahead, talking to a young man, who was listening carefully to the kidnapper. Jim got out as well and approached the two men. The three turned and walked further into the clearing. The girls watched from the car. Bob, Jim, and the young stranger stopped in front of a weird-looking machine. It looked like a large kite, but it had an engine.

20 Takako turned to Christine and whispered, "What is that?"

"I think it's an ultra-light aircraft. You know, a portable, one-man plane. A hang-glider with a motor. Have you ever been in one? I haven't." Christine continued.

25 "What we have to do is get an escape plan, Takako. Bob and Jim don't seem to be too bright, so it shouldn't be very hard. For example, why would they put those masks over our heads when we arrived at the house, but not this morning when we came up from the basement? I mean, we could see exactly where we were. And Jim wasn't too smart leaving us alone, was he?"

30 Takako nodded. She was beginning to see what Christine meant. After her initial fear of the whole situation, Takako could see that the two of them could probably outwit the two kidnappers and get away. She did feel a lot more confident with Christine beside her.

Christine continued.

35 "However, I am *VERY* curious to know what these two guys are up to. They obviously are not the leaders of this operation. And *WHAT* do they want with your violin? That's what I'd like to know."

"You mean that you want to stay longer and see what these two men do with us and the violin?" Takako became worried again.

40 "Well, not exactly, Takako. But if we get away now, by the time we reach the police, Bob and Jim will be long gone, and we don't have any proof that they kidnapped us. Besides, I'm curious to know who the boss of this operation is. In fact..." Christine's face lit up into a smile.

"What is it Christine?"

45 "Well, maybe we should play along with them for awhile, just to see where we are going. If we do as they say, no harm will come to us. Right?"

"I'm not sure about this, Christine."

"Don't worry. We'll obey their orders until we find out who and what is involved; then we'll go to the police."

"What if it's too late and we can't get to the police?"

50 "Don't worry, Takako. These two are not intelligent enough to keep us hostage for long. And I would love to catch all the bad guys in one place. You agree?"

"Yes, but we are not detectives, Christine. It will be dangerous."

55 "Trust me, Takako. I think our plan will work. Just do as they say until I give you the signal."

"What do you mean, *SIGNAL*?"

"A little like this morning, when I said *RUN*. Just be prepared to take action when I give you directions. So, until then, we'll be obedient, but not *TOO* obedient. OK?"

60 Takako was apprehensive about this new plan, but she had to trust her friend. Christine was right; there had been many times she could have escaped, so there would be more. As well, *WHAT* did these men want with her and her violin? She thought there was only one way to find out, and that was to do as she was told.

65 "OK, Christine. I'll try my best."

Jim had come back to the car and interrupted them.

"Heh, girls, listen. Here are the rules for the day. You are not allowed to talk to the young man about this little trip of yours. If you do, he may have a little trouble himself. And it will be your fault. Do you understand?"

70 "Do you mean we are going to be riding in that little airplane?"

Christine had the feeling that they were all going to go for a little ride. And she was afraid of heights!

75 "You got that right! We have to get across the border quietly, and we figured this would be a fun way to do it. After all, Takako, you don't have a visa for the United States, do you?"

Takako shook her head, and then looked at the small plane. How could such a thing get up into the air? She wanted to ask Christine if they were going to ride *IN* the craft or *ON* it, but she kept quiet. She started getting nervous.

80 Jim continued with his rules.

"Takako will go first. David there will drop her off about 5 kilometers south of here. Then it will be my turn, followed by you, Christine. Don't look so worried, ladies! Dave is an excellent pilot, and we're paying him very well. His craft can comfortably carry two people."

85 Bob was motioning them to approach the ultra-light. The three began their walk to the plane. Neither Takako nor Christine spoke, but it was obvious that they were worried for each other.

90 When they arrived at the waiting pilot and his client, the young man greeted the girls with a big smile. His broad grin was in contrast to Bob's serious look and Jim's dour expression.

"Good morning ladies! What a great day for your first ultra-light flight! And of course, a day of duty-free shopping."

Christine quickly replied, "Duty-free shopping?"

95 Bob interrupted. "Yes, dear, I told the man what we were doing over the border. He said he gives flights all the time for the same reason." He looked at Christine as if to say '*BE QUIET!*', and she took the hint.

100 Whatever was happening, Christine thought, the pilot didn't know they were being kidnapped! She looked at the young man and changed her train of thought. He's cute, she decided. It would be a pleasure flying with him, or at least not as scary as she first thought.

David prepared the ultra-light for take-off. He started the engine, then motioned to Takako to climb aboard. She nervously got in. David helped her with the safety harness, and she put on a helmet that he had provided. Jim handed her the violin.

105 David had gotten into his pilot's chair, buckled up, and began to taxi to the end of the clearing. Takako looked over at Christine one last time. The two girls looked at each other as if to say everything would be all right soon.

110 The plane gathered speed, and with a roar of the little engine it was airborne. Takako felt a rush of wind on her face. She looked down to see the small clearing in the forest fast disappearing. Jim, Bob, and Christine were becoming small specks in the distance. Looking down was scarier than looking up at the clear blue sky, so Takako concentrated her sights on where they were headed.

115 David turned and yelled something to her, but the noise of the wind and the small motor prevented her from understanding his comments. He pointed down and said something more. She looked below the ultra-light to see a group of Canada geese in V-formation, winging their way in the same direction as the aircraft. There were about 25 of the birds. They didn't seem to notice the two people and their flying machine. David dipped his wings to get a bit closer to the gaggle of geese, but they swerved east, moving as though they were one. It was a marvelous sight, and Takako knew she would never forget it. She just wished that the circumstances were a little less stressful. However, she did realize that she would never have the opportunity to see such a wonderful picture of nature if she wasn't in so much trouble.

125 David had mentioned before they had taken off that the flight would be about five kilometers, and at the speed they were going, it wouldn't be long before they landed. Takako, meanwhile, looked around at the scenery. There was mostly forest around them, and in the distance she could see a river and some snow-covered mountains.

130 As David began the descent, Takako began to get nervous again. She was surprised, because during the flight she had almost forgotten all the troubles that were awaiting her.

135 As they approached the landing sight, a cow pasture, the pilot turned to his passenger and warned her of the big bump on landing. Takako nodded that she understood, and hung on tightly to the frame of the ultra-light. Then they landed, a lot softer than she had thought. David soon had his plane stopped. Takako unfastened her seat belt and harness and  
140 stepped out. She was a bit wobbly, a little bit like she would be if she had been on a boat for several days. But she felt OK, and she smiled at David.

"Thank you very much. I really enjoyed the flight."

"Heh, Takako, did you see those geese? I think they were going south for the winter."

145 David got back into the plane, started the engine, and yelled to her.

"Anyway, gotta go. See ya!"

With that, he roared off into the sky, leaving Takako alone in the field.

150 Takako looked around. To keep her company were about a dozen cows, but they were lazily content to feed on the grass in the pasture, not minding the intruder. She found a large, dry boulder and sat down to wait for David's next passenger, Jim. She didn't even think of running away because she didn't know where she was.

155 Just as David predicted, a quarter of an hour later she heard the drone of the small engine as the ultra-light approached the field for its second landing. Takako could see Jim sitting behind David, and she took pleasure in seeing the fear in his face. He was obviously afraid of flying, and being in a small craft like an ultra-light would not be easy for him.

160 After stopping, Jim leaped out of his seat, relieved to be on the ground again. David was laughing, and he winked at Takako as he turned the plane to take off once more.

Jim was calmer now, and he and Takako watched the little aircraft head north to fetch Christine.

"Is Bob coming too?", questioned Takako.

165 "No. We don't need him on this leg of the trip. He'll meet us in Seattle this evening. Once Christine is airborne, he'll take the car back to the house. He'll wait there until he hears from me. I'll phone him from the little town not far from here. So, once your little Canadian friend arrives, we'll get going."

170 Now at least Takako knew where they were headed. But she was still curious.

"Why are we going to Seattle this way? Wouldn't it be easier to go with Bob in the car?"

Jim was silent for a moment. Then he spoke.

175 "Well, let me just say that you and I would have trouble getting across the border without customs officers asking a lot of questions. You don't have a visa, and I, well, let's just say that it's not such a good idea for me to be stopped at the border. Understand?"

180 Takako nodded. She wasn't quite sure what he meant, but she knew  
that he was no 'model' citizen. She turned and looked into the northern sky  
for the airplane. It was a beautiful view, with the cattle grazing quietly on  
the emerald-green grass in front of her. The pasture was fenced, and the  
line of fence posts went down a hill to the river that she had seen from  
above. It was dirty-brown and running fast, due to all the rain there had  
185 been in the area recently. Beyond the river was a forest, a darker green  
than the grass. The trees were tall and thickly bunched. It looked very  
much like the Canadian wilderness that Takako had studied in school.  
Just then she heard the distant drone of the ultra-light. She saw it in the sky,  
a tiny speck reflecting the late autumn sun. Jim looked up as well and  
190 watched Christine's approach.

"When she gets here, we'll have a short walk to our rental car. But  
we'll have to hurry. I bet Bob ten dollars that we'd beat him to the motel in  
Seattle. He thinks..." Jim stopped talking suddenly. He stared into the sky at  
David and his machine, listening for the sound of the engine.

195 Takako listened as well. She heard what Jim had heard. The ultra-  
light was in trouble! The engine sputtered, then cut out completely. The  
two on the ground gazed helplessly as the small plane circled over the  
forest on the other side of the river. It was rapidly losing altitude. David  
managed to start it again, but immediately after, it stopped. Then it  
200 suddenly plunged into the trees, disappearing from their view.  
Takako screamed. "*CHRISTINE!*"

Jim even looked concerned. He cleared his throat. "Umm... come on,  
let's go!"

"But we have to help them! They may be hurt!"

205 "Yes I know. But we can't get across the river from here. We'll have to  
get to the car and then to a phone. Then we can get some help for them.  
There is nothing we can do here. So let's get going!"

Takako couldn't leave without at least trying to help her friend. She  
began to run towards the river. Jim made a grab for her to stop her but she  
210 got away and kept running. She glanced back to see Jim limping slowly  
after her. Obviously he wasn't going to catch her.

Just then she heard a loud *BANG* which made her stop dead in her  
tracks! Takako looked back at Jim who was slowly approaching with a gun  
in his hand and an angry look on his face. She became very frightened as he  
215 got closer. She had under-estimated Jim. She had begun to think that he  
wasn't such a bad man, but *SHOOTING* at her?! He was not only mean, he  
was dangerous! No wonder he didn't want to be stopped at the border by  
customs officers.

"Listen, you! I won't take any more of your running away!" Jim  
220 waved the gun in Takako's face.

"I can't catch you, but this can. Do you understand? Now, let's get  
going! We've already wasted valuable time already!"

Jim grabbed Takako's arm and started hobbling in the opposite  
direction from the plane crash. Takako looked back once more in horror.  
225 Christine! Where are you? Please be OK!