

## PART 1

### CRUCIAL DECISION

My name is Chris. I was born and raised in Cape Town in South Africa . I've been working in my friend`s company in South Africa for years. The company distributes mountaineering equipment all around the world.

I decided to leave my job and to go somewhere. Even though I liked the job I wanted and needed a change. I was wondering where to go....Europe was calling me but I never had the time. My biggest problem, however, was telling my boss; we've been good friends for a long time so I knew it wasn't going to be easy

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*Chris* Jack, there is something I've got to tell you.

*Jack* Yeah, what's up ? You want a pay raise ?

*Chris* No, actually I want to quit my job because....

*Jack* You want to ,, what'' ? You can't possibly be serious!

*Chris* Ok, I know it's out of the blue.

*Jack* Now, wait a minute. What`s wrong ?

*Chris* As for work, everything is fine, but...I just want a change, travel, meet new people...Simply, do something different..

*Jack* Hold on. What do you want to do and where do you want to go?

*Chris* I'd like to go to Europe.

**Jack** To Europe?

**Chris** Well, my brother has been living there for some time in the Czech Republic. So, I thought that would be ideal.

**Jack** In the Czech Republic? Where the hell is it? You never told me. Why there?

**Chris** That would be a long story. He was going out with a girl who is from there. He followed her to her country and stayed there. So, I'd like to go there too.

**Jack** Have you thought about this carefully? Listen, you can go see him for a few weeks and come back... It's not necessary to quit.

**Chris** I've made up my mind, the change will do me good. Even though I still don't know what I'll be doing there, I've always wanted to go to Europe and now that my brother is there, it makes things easier.

**Jack** Sit down, please... It's not so...I really need you here. There's loads of work...you know that yourself. Please, reconsider!

**Chris** I know Jack. Don't make this harder for me. I like working for you, but I've already decided. I'm sure you'll manage.

**Jack** I see. I suppose there's not much I can do about it now, is there ? Well, what to do?

**Chris** I've been thinking about this for a long time. I just couldn't take the plunge, so I kept putting it off.

**Jack** And what about Jane ?

**Chris** Well, you know, I mean it's over between me and Jane.

**Jack** Really? That's news! I thought things were good...you were getting on well.

**Chris** Yeah, but it's just.... I don't know...She's sweet and all but it just didn't work out.

**Jack** What did she say? Was she upset ?

*Chris Eh.. you know, I haven` t told her yet.*

*Jack What! You haven` t told her yet. That`s really great, my god. And when do you want to tell her?*

*Chris As soon as possible...*

*Jack When do you want to leave?*

*Chris I haven` t go the tickets yet and I have to sort out a few things, but it shouldn` t také long. I` d like to leave in two weeks at the latest..*

*Jack I see, well, you sure can suprise... if you need any help, just let me know.*

*Chris Thanks, Jack. I appreciate it. I` ll miss you.*

*Jack You can always come back.*

*Chris Thanks, we` ll stay in touch, right?*

*Jack Of course. I might even stop by sometime.*

*Chris That would be great.*

## **PART 2**

### **MY BROTHER SCOTT**

I was glad Jack took it well. I wouldn` t have liked to have lost my friend over my plans. Well, I know I would have left in any case because my brother had invited me a few times and I had been missing him a lot, we have a good relationship... But it wasn` t always that way.

Earlier, I had the feeling that I didn` t know him at all, we just lived in the same house. Neither of us got on well with our parents, they divorced, and Scott went to study university in America. When we said our good byes, I wasn` t terribly sad. But I just didn` t want to see him go. I felt like I` d never get to know who he really was.

*Chris So Scott, that`s it then, yeah ? You` re finally leaving. Are you excited ?*

*Scott Sure I am excited. Change is good. You have my new e mail, haven't you ?*

*Chris Yeah, I got it.*

*Scott Right. It might take some time till I get back to you but that doesn't matter. You know I've got to get settled.*

*Chris Sure, I understand.*

*Scott Listen, Chris, I've got to dash. Take care of yourself... and write soon!*

*Chris You too, Scott. Have a nice journey.*

*Scott Thanks.*

*Narrator*

I sent him an e-mail soon after he left. I told him everything that I had been trying to tell him all these years. He had been so busy with his life that he didn't really have time to learn about mine. Probably a typical older brother role.

A few days later I got his reply. When I read it, I had to smile because I got a long letter filled with brotherly advice, answers to my questions and a lot of information...Finally we became a bit closer. I started visiting my brother and we became best friends.

Now we haven't seen each other for a long time. It was because of an au pair that was looking after our friends children and that my brother fell in love with. The problem was that she was from the Czech Republic and after some time she had to leave... My brother decided to follow her and even though they split up after some time, he never came back. And as I said, he had invited me a few times to visit him. So, I was going to, now that I had decided, call him.

*Chris Hey Scott, it's me, Chris!*

**Scott** Chris !! I'm glad you called. How's it going? What's new? It's been a long time.

**Chris** I know, I know, I'm fine..Listen, Scott, I have news. I wanted to send you an e-mail but I thought I had better call.

**Scott** You sound serious. Is everything okay ? Don't tell me you're getting married!

**Chris** Jesus, Scott, not that! It's something else. You know how you've been inviting me to come to the Czech Republic? Well, I decided to do it.

**Scott** Chris! That`s fantastic !! Finally !! When are you coming ?

**Chris** I don`t know yet. Soon though. I wasn't sure what you say.

**Scott** Don`t be silly Chris. What would I possibly say? You made my day. This will be simply fantastic. You know what ? Let me know if you need anything, right?

**Chris** Sure Scott. I'll let you know when I'm coming.

**Scott** Yeah, just drop me an email.

**Chris** Fine, bye for now.

**Scott** Bye.

**PART 3**

## SURPRISING ENCOUNTER

I had a lot to do, - the plane ticket, visa, packing and other stuff necessary before departing. I knew it would take a few good days. I went to a travel agent that my friend had recommended. I couldn't find it as it was on the other side of the city. I decided to park my car and ask someone. As luck would have it, the street was deserted. After awhile, I noticed a girl looking through a shop window. I went up to her and when she turned around, I couldn't believe my eyes. It was my school sweetheart Liz.

**Chris** Liz, is it you !?

**Liz** Chris !! What a surprise ! I haven't seen you since for years, the last time was at school right?

**Chris** Yeah, that's right...Man! I'm sure glad to see you. You still look the same. Really, you haven't changed a bit. How's life?

**Liz** I'm fine. What about you ? How have you been?

**Chris** I'm fine too. I can't believe I ran into you here. You see I'm on my way to a travel agent to buy a plane ticket.. I'm going to Europe.

**Liz** Really !! You're going to Europe ! That's great! Where are you going exactly ?

**Chris** I'm going to the Czech republic.

**Liz** Czech Republic ! My god, I've never heard of it. Where is it? Can you tell I don't know much about Europe?

**Chris** How to explain...It's in the center of Europe and it's landlocked.

**Liz** How long are you going there for?

**Chris** Hmm.. Uh...I don't know yet. I might stay there.

**Liz** Really, you've got to tell me more about this. You got time to go for a beer? There's a nice bar I know around the corner.

*Narrator*

I will never forget our first meeting a few years ago, because it was like in romantic film. I was waiting for a friend to pick me up after a concert. After a while, he phoned me to say that his car had broken down. Just at that moment, another car pulled over and a girl standing next to me got in. She smiled at me and said, „ Need a lift „, ? I didn't hesitate to get in. The girl, Liz was her name, was going to a party. She asked me to join her. How could I refuse? And because I didn't know anyone at the party, I spent the entire night with her. We hit it off straight away. I found that we had the same sense of humor and had a lot in common. We had a good relationship but after 6 month we started to argue and finally we broke up. Then I lost touch with her. Now we were sitting in a nice bar. I was looking at Liz, and she really looked great.

*Chris* Liz, you look gorgeous!

*Liz* How sweet of you! I was on holiday in California and relaxing did me good. It was really great. Anyway, lets talk about you. I want to hear all about your plans.

*Chris* And what do you want to hear?

*Liz* It can't be true! You act like it's no big deal. Well, start with why did you choose...the...Jesus, where did you say you were going?

*Chris* To the Czech Republic...why...Well my brother lives there.. He moved there a couple of years ago. I started to feel kind of bored here , so I thought I might go over there. How are things with you?

*Liz* Do you know what you're going to do there?

*Chris* Don't know exactly yet. But my brother said he would help me find something... So it shouldn't be problem...I see. And what about you? Will you tell me now how you've been doing all these years?

Liz Well, you know, up and down. I got a good job after college. I even got promoted from accountant to chief accountant, rather quickly. After some time I met this guy in our firm, Sam, and we got married shortly after. It didn't work out, though. We argued a lot...so now I'm divorced and I'm not chief accountant.

**Chris** So, what do you do now Liz ?

**Liz** I work in a travel agency, QUICK GATEAWAY. and ...

**Chris** You work for QUICK GATEAWAY ? You're joking! That's the agency I was looking for when I met you! I want get my plane ticket there.

**Liz** Well, I suppose I can help you with the ticket and visa. I mainly do domestic flights but I'll be happy to help you.

**Chris** That's great. It's my lucky day today. Oh I'm sorry I interrupted you.

**Liz** No, that's fine. Anyway I like the job and I travel quite a lot. You see we get discount tickets.

I've got to say that I'm quite happy now. And you Chris, do you have someone? And what do you do, Chris. I mean what did you do ? You've probably quit your job since you're leaving, haven't you ?

**Chris** Yeah, I quit yesterday. Well I worked in my friend's company, selling mountaineering equipment. It was not bad, Jack, that was my boss, you know, was fine. It was not the same with the work. I liked it at first but then it got boring. The same thing happened with my relationship with Jane. It was good at first but now it's just routine. She is busy all the time, working a lot. No thrill now, you know.

**Liz** So you split up ?

**Chris** Actually I haven't told her yet... that I want to leave.

**Liz** Incredible! The same old Chris ! Buying a ticket and flying away and his girlfriend doesn't know about it. Chris I can't believe it. Poor girl. When are you going to tell her ?

**Chris** Liz, she is not my girlfriend anymore

**Liz** But she doesn't know that, does she ?

**Chris** No, she doesn't. I'm gonna tell her tonight.

**Liz** I see. ....

**Phone rings ...**

**Liz** Sorry it's my boss calling me.

**Phone conversation –**

**Liz** Yeah I'll be there in 15 minutes. See you then. I'm sorry Chris, I've got to go. That was my boss.

**Chris** No problem Liz. Listen, I'll see you in your office then. Where is your travel agency ?

**Liz** It's just round the corner. See that white building ?

**Chris** The one with the blue gate ?

**Liz** Yeah, that one. Our office is just next to it.

**Chris** O.k. Oh., Liz one more thing. I want to throw a farewell party before I leave. Would you like to come ? I'd be happy to have you there.

**Liz** Sure, that sounds good. We'll talk about it at my office. I'm sorry but I really have to go now.

**Chris** Fine, I'll have something to eat and then I'll go to the agency. Bye for now.

**PART 4**

## **BREAK UP WITH JANE**

I felt good. Liz had lifted my spirits. If only I didn't have to solve the problem with Jane.

Some things just need to be done, I really had to call her. I tried to remember how we actually met, how I got to know her.

Actually we had been friends for a long time, we were in the same circle. There was Jonathan, Derek and Amanda. We were inseparable. And that's how it was for ages, until something sparked between us. I had always thought Jane looked stunning. Auburn hair cascading down to her neck. The face of an angel, brown eyes sparkling.. Anyway, she slowly became more than a friend somehow. Soon we were going out.

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**Chris** Hey Jane, it`s me. Am I interrupting you ?

**Jane** Hi, I haven't got much time. What do you need ?

**Chris** Jane, you never have time.

**Jane** This is not why you're calling, right? So, drop it, please. I'm not in the mood to quarrel with you.

**Chris** Ok, sorry. Are you free tonight ? I mean this evening. I'd like to go to that new Thai restaurant. You remember, we talked about going there ?

**Jane** Sure I do. Let me just check my diary. Oh no ! We have a presentation at work. We`re launching a new product. I'm really sorry, Chris. It'll go on for ages. You know my boss.

**Chris** I see. How`re you fixed for tomorrow then?

**Jane** Tomorrow `s fine. Can you pick me up at 6 ? At my place.

**Chris** That`d be a bit tight. Let`s make it 7, okay ?

**Jane** Sounds good.

**Chris** O.K. 7 at your place. Bye then.

*Jane Bye, see you.*

***Narrator***

The new restaurant was a good choice. When we got to the place it was buzzing with young people. We entered a dark entrance that led us down to a basement. When the door opened we could hear the very cheerful sound of gentle laughter and chatter. It was so warm and inviting.

*Chris Wow, Look at this place ! It`s something, isn`t it ?*

*Jane Yeah, looks gorgeous. I hope the food is good.*

*Chris A friend of mine said the food is heavenly. And huge portions as well.*

*Jane Good. I`m starving.*

*Chris Me too. Let`s find somewhere to sit.*

*Jane There is a free table over there..*

***Narrator***

We flumped down into some low chairs around a wooden table. Rather than tackle the large menu, we asked for a selection for two. Our friendly waiter also suggested a vodka cocktail, which was excellent.

Then we went to the dining area where we were greeted with low seductive lighting and candles everywhere.

The food was mouth watering and the flavours were out of this world. The waiters were really charming and the service was excellent. They took their time to make sure everything was to our satisfaction. Jane ordered the beef salad and I had the curry.

**Waiter** What would you like to have, madam ?

**Jane** I'll have the beef salad.

**Waiter** Anything else ?

**Jane** No, thanks, that`s all. Maybe something to drink. Can you recommend something ?

**Waiter** We have an excellent vodka cocktail or spicy Thai wine. Both are worth trying.

**Jane** Fine, I'll have the cocktail. What about you, Chris ?

**Chris** Yeah I'll have one too and I'll go for the curry. Ehm, .. and make it spicy please.

**Waiter** Certainly, sir.

**Narrator**

Jane was looking a bit tired today. I guess it was from the project that she`d been working on.

She started talking about her work, how her boss was driving her crazy and other stuff that I was not really interested in. She didn`t seem to notice my lack of

interest.. I was glad when the meal arrived. It was the perfect opportunity to change the topic from her monologue.

**Chris**    How`s the salad ?

**Jane**    Great! I haven`t had anything this good in ages.

**Chris**    Mine is excellent too. Very hot actually. Just the way I like it.

**Jane**    Chris ? You `ve been awfully quiet tonight. Is everething okay ?

**Chris**    Yeah, I guess so.

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**Narrator**    I sat hunched at the table, right hand holding up my head. Why, for God`s sake, hadn`t I told her straight away what the problem was.

**Jane**    Why the frown then, dear ?

**Chris**    Jane, there`s something I have to tell you. It`s important.

**Jane**    What is it, dear ?

**Chris**    Please, don`t call me `dear` all the time. I`m sorry this is tough for me

**Jane**    It`s O.K. Chris...I`m sorry... you know you can tell me anything.

**Chris**    I know

**Narrator**    I was sitting in my chair, staring at my food, unable to look her in the eyes.

**Chris** Listen, Jane, I wanted to talk about us. I think there is something wrong. We quarrel all the time, don't have time for each other.

**Jane** I think you see everything in black and white. Nothings perfect.

**Chris** I think we need a change. Me definately.

**Jane** What ? You want to break up ?

**Chris** I'm sorry. We can still be friends.

**Jane** Oh..... Is that what you want .?

**Chris** Listen Jane, we both know that it's not working out.. Don't you feel the same?. Look at the way we live. You`re always busy at work. We hardly spend time with each other.

**Jane** Now Chris, I know that our relationship is not perfect. Perhaps we are going through a small crisis. I know I've been quite busy lately and with all the presure at work it`s sometimes hard. But that`s gonna change soon. Once we finish that bloody project.....

**Chris** Come on Jane. I've heard this before. There`s always some project going on. Your work always comes first. It's nothing against you but this is not the way. We've never gone on holiday in all these years.

**Jane** Chris that`s very selfish of you. You know how much I wanted to get this job. Every relationship is about sacrifice. I like my job very much, it makes me feel useful. You can't want me to slack off.

**Chris** Maybe I'm just not ready for sacrifices . I want to travel, and I've always wanted to travel, see other countries. Be independent. I just don`t want to fall into routine, which is what is unfortunately happening with you. You know what I want...I want to leave for europe.

**Jane** What !? What are you talking about! You want to go to Europe ? I..., I just .....

*Chris Look Jane, we can be still friends.*

*Jane What `re you talking about ? You want to go to Europe and stay friends ?  
Give me a break! I`m not going to listen to this nonsense.*

*Narrator*

God, was she red. She dropped her fork and got up from her chair. She shot me an angry look. You could read her face. She was furious. I`d never seen her so angry before. I felt miserable. She was searching for the right words. Then she just shouted :

*Jane You know what ? Get lost !!*

## **PART 5**

### **MY DEPARTURE**

And that was it . She didn`t even finish her meal,...just left.  
I paid the bill and went straight back home. I needed a good night`s sleep.  
When I woke up the next morning I still didn`t feel well about the meeting with Jane. On the other hand I was glad it was over. I decided to send her a message to tell her that I am really sorry. I knew she wouldn`t replay. I knew her too well. But it made me feel a bit better.

The time was flying. I was leaving in a few days now. Liz helped me with the ticket and visa. I was pretty much ready. The last thing before my departure was my farewell party. I invited just a few close friends.  
Liz came in the afternoon to help me with some sandwiches and drinks. We had a nice talk. We talked about our lives and plans for the future. I asked Liz to come to the Czech Republic and visit me. To my surprise she liked the idea. And she promised to see me off at the airport..  
The party went really well. No broken glasses, nor angry neighbours. I got a lot of nice presents. I was thinking about Liz; she was really sweet. I had small doubts for a moment about leaving. But only for a short moment. Then the big day came. I,

feeling really excited, went to the airport with Liz. There was a traffic jam on the way. Still we managed to arrive in time.

We were sitting in a small bar now. Soon they would announce my flight.

*Liz* *So Chris, this is it I suppose. How do you feel ?*

*Chris* *Very excited, you know, but a bit afraid.*

*Liz* *Oh Please, afraid of what?*

*Chris* *I know my brother is expecting me but it's going to be a big change.*

*Liz* *You'll manage...believe me...make sure you let me know when you get there. I'll be thinking about you.*

*Chris* *Sure, Liz, be good and take of yourself.*

*Liz* *You too. Good luck. Bye.*