

The Choice

She stood at the side of the bridge looking down into the fast flowing river. The current was strong, carrying various pieces of rubbish towards the open sea.

She remembered standing on this bridge several years ago when she first came to London. At that time she was full of excitement and energy, having won a place at medical school, along with her then boyfriend Alex. After the first hectic months in the capital that relationship had petered out and they parted without rancour. It was just time to move on.

Laura threw herself into her studies, sometimes accused by her small circle of friends of being anti-social. However her dedication paid off and she achieved an excellent degree in medicine, moving on to a series of placements to broaden her experience and understanding. She spent some time in the Maternity Department of the Chelsea and Westminster. It was hard work with long and unpredictable hours, but she never lost her delight and satisfaction at being able to help new life into the world, especially if the case was challenging and complex.

Another placement took her to the Intensive Care Unit of St. Thomas'. This fascinated her, particularly the growing role of technology both in diagnosis and treatment.

In time Laura's skill and confidence attracted the attention of the senior consultant in her department. Peter Sinclair was also a high flyer having gained his position at a relatively young age and now regarded as something of an expert in his chosen field of Neurosurgery. During one of their regular meetings to discuss recent cases he suggested to her that she could climb higher and should be considering taking steps towards being a consultant herself.

When the discussion left medical matters towards the end of the meeting, they discovered a mutual interest in classic cars. It seemed that Peter had always wanted to own a Jaguar Mark 2, like Inspector Morse! Laura, on the other hand, wanted a Triumph Roadster, like Detective Sergeant Bergerac! They laughed when they realised that they were both interested in cars driven by fictional detectives.

This connection led to further meetings for coffee in their breaks, then dinner after work in a new restaurant overlooking the river. Eventually

they became lovers, each finding in the other something lacking in the rest of their lives. From the outset Peter was honest about the fact that he was married with a family and Laura accepted the limitations that this placed upon their time together.

For a time their arrangement suited them both, but one day Laura heard from an old medical school friend in Australia. One of the leading teaching hospitals was recruiting for new staff who could offer the sort of experience that Laura had on her CV. It would be quite a step up in terms of salary and status. Interviews were being conducted next week in London, in the hope of attracting applicants from some of the major British hospitals.

Laura had a lot to consider.....