

Chapter 1 “Every Morning”

‘I’m leaving now,’ Teresa said.

I looked up from the newspaper. I was in the kitchen, at the table.

‘I’m leaving,’ Teresa, my wife, said again. She stood at the kitchen table and looked down at me. I looked at my watch. It was eight o’clock in the morning. Time for Teresa, my wife, to go to work. She was a lawyer, a very good lawyer. And she was beautiful.

‘What are you going to do today?’ Teresa asked. ‘Don’t go back to bed! Why don’t you go out and look for a job?’

‘Oh no,’ I thought. ‘Eight o’clock in the morning, and she’s telling me to get a job.’



‘But I’ve got a job,’ I said, for about the thousandth time. ‘I’m a writer.’

‘But you never finish your books! You begin lots of books, but you never finish them.’

She was right. I write by hand in small notebooks – I’ve got lots of notebooks under the bed – but I don’t finish the books.

And sometimes I don’t work. Sometimes I sit all day with a white piece of paper and a pen and write nothing. Sometimes I sleep all morning and then I get up and watch television all afternoon.

‘You need a real job,’ Teresa said. ‘We must have more money!’

‘Why?’ I asked. ‘Why must we have more money?’

‘We need money to buy things,’ she said. ‘You need new clothes. Look at your old clothes!’ I had an old pullover and jeans on. She had expensive black clothes on.

‘There’s nothing wrong with my clothes,’ I answered. ‘My jeans are a little dirty, but I can wash them.’

‘You do need new clothes!’ Teresa said. ‘And I want a nice car. And we need a new television!’

I closed my eyes. Why was Teresa like this in the mornings?

‘Open your eyes! Don’t go to sleep,’ Teresa said. ‘I’m talking to you.’

‘Look,’ I answered. ‘I’m not sleeping. I’m thinking. Anyway, you don’t read my books,’ I said.

‘I read the first half of “Every Morning”,’ Teresa said. ‘I liked it.’

Oh, yes, I thought. That was two years ago. Teresa read the first half of one of my books called “Every Morning”.

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It was about a young man in London. She sent the book to all the big London and Hollywood film makers. The film makers didn't answer. And I didn't finish the book.

'Good,' I answered.

'I think I'm going to be home late this evening,' she said. 'There's a lot to do at work.'

'Goodbye,' I answered. 'Have a nice day.'

Teresa closed the door. She didn't say goodbye.

I stood up. Then I saw something black on the floor. It was Teresa's laptop computer. I opened the door but



Teresa wasn't there. I went and sat in a chair in front of the television. I thought about Teresa. She was thirty years old. I was thirty years old. She had dark hair and eyes. I had dark hair and eyes. She was one metre eighty. I was one metre eighty. But Teresa liked to work with computers and I didn't like computers. I liked to write with an old pen. She made a lot of money in her job and I made nothing. And now she was angry with me – again.

I closed my eyes and went to sleep.

Chapter 2 *The letter*

I heard a noise. What was it? I opened my eyes and looked at my watch. It was nine o'clock. There was someone at the front door. I got up slowly and went to the door.

It was the postman. He had some letters in his hand. He looked at my hair.

'Just got up, Mr Wormold?' the postman said. 'I got up six hours ago.'

I didn't answer. I was half-asleep.



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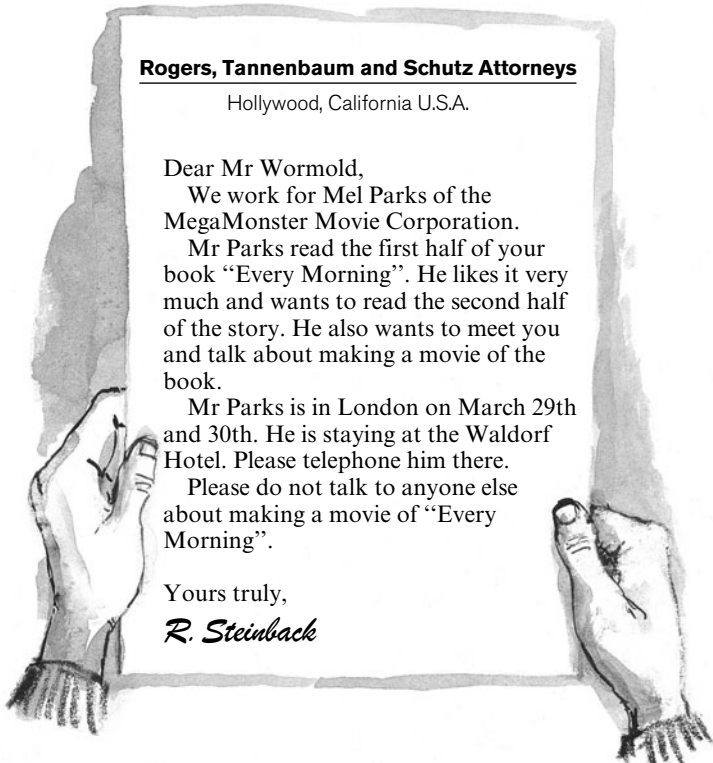
‘There’s a letter for you,’ the postman said. ‘It’s from the USA. Write your name here, please.’

I wrote my name on the postman’s paper and took the letter.

‘Thank you,’ I said and closed the door. I went into the kitchen and looked at the letter. It was big and blue. At the top it said: ‘Rogers, Tannenbaum and Schutz, Attorneys, Hollywood, California, USA.’

‘American lawyers!’ I thought. Was the letter for Teresa and not for me? But my name was on the front.

Then I opened the letter and read it.



I put the letter on the table and smiled to myself. An answer at last, two years after Teresa sent the first half of my book “Every Morning” to all the Hollywood film makers. The American word ‘movie’ was much nicer than the British word ‘film’. And today was March 29th!

I found the phone number of the Waldorf Hotel in the telephone book. Then I telephoned Mel Parks.

‘Hi, Mel Parks here.’

‘Erm. Mr Parks. You don’t know me,’ I said slowly. ‘My name’s Wormold, Frank Wormold.’

‘Mr Wormold!’ Mel Parks answered in a loud voice. ‘Or can I call you Frank? It’s very good to talk to you! How are you?’

‘Fine, thank you,’ I said.

‘Say, Frank,’ Mel Parks said. ‘Why don’t we have lunch today?’

‘Yes,’ I said. ‘How nice.’

‘OK,’ Mel Parks said. ‘See you here at the Waldorf at twelve thirty.’

‘Right,’ I said.

‘And bring the second half of your story “Every Morning” with you,’ Mel Parks said.

I put the telephone down. There was no second half of “Every Morning”. I looked at my watch. It was half past nine. I got a notebook and my old pen and started writing.

When I looked at my watch again it was eleven o’clock. The second half of “Every Morning” was not finished, but it was time to change my clothes. I wanted to look good because the Waldorf was a very famous hotel.

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I put on my best clothes. A new brown shirt and dark brown trousers and a jacket. Then I left the flat and got into the lift.

‘Sixth floor. Going down,’ the lift said. It was a talking lift.

‘Yes, I know,’ I replied.

When I got out of the lift I took a bus to Piccadilly Circus and walked to the Waldorf Hotel.



Chapter 3 *Mel Parks*

Lots of rich people come to the Waldorf Hotel. I looked at myself in a shop window. I didn't look rich.

Mel Parks was by the front door of the hotel. He did look rich. He was short and fat. He had a green suit and a big red tie.

'Well, Frank,' Mel Parks said in his loud voice. 'Good to see you!'

'Hello, Mr Parks,' I said with a small smile.

'Don't call me "Mr Parks",' he answered. 'Call me Mel!'

'Hello, Mel,' I said.

'Let's get some lunch,' Mel said.

The Waldorf Hotel restaurant was very good. Lots of rich, beautiful people and lots of rich, beautiful food. Mel and I had caviar, and lobster and champagne. Lots of champagne. I was very happy. Mel liked me and Mel liked my story.

Then Mel said: 'Hey, Frank. I loved the first half of your book. Did you bring the second half of the book with you?'

'Er, no,' I said. 'I'm writing it again. I want to make it better.' I didn't want to tell Mel the book wasn't finished.

Mel looked at me. He looked unhappy.

'Oh no,' he said. 'I wanted to take it to California with me.'

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'I'm sorry,' I answered. 'You see I write very slowly. I write by hand.'

'Don't tell me!' Mel said. 'I know. Your writing isn't easy to read. Why don't you use a computer?'

'I ... I ...' I started to answer. I didn't want to tell Mel I didn't like computers.

‘Hey, Frank,’ Mel said. ‘Is it money? That’s easy. MegaMonster wants your book. You’re going to be a rich man. You’re going to be famous. Let’s say we give you \$100,000 now.’

I looked at Mel. My mouth opened. I couldn’t speak.

‘Oh,’ Mel said quickly. ‘\$100,000 is too little, is it? Let’s say \$200,000, then.’

I looked at Mel again. My mouth was still open. I still couldn’t speak. \$200,000 was so much money.

‘OK,’ Mel said quickly again. ‘And a computer. You need a computer. You’re going to have the best computer in London. OK?’

‘Oh,’ I said slowly.

Mel took my hand. ‘Good. Let’s get the computer today. And you’re going to finish the book and give it to me this week. All right?’ He smiled.

‘Yes,’ I said. I didn’t know what to do or think. \$200,000! I was rich!

We had some more champagne. Mel talked and talked. I didn’t listen much. I thought about \$200,000.

After lunch Mel and I took a taxi to a big computer shop. Mel went into the shop first and Mel did all the talking. ‘Right,’ Mel said. ‘I want the biggest and the best PC you have. I want lots of RAM, I want a colour printer and I want a fast modem.’

‘Mel,’ I said slowly. ‘I don’t think I need a colour printer. I write books.’

Mel looked at me. ‘Yes, you do,’ he said in a loud voice.

‘OK. And what’s RAM?’ I asked in a quiet voice. ‘Why do I need lots of it?’