

Life Exchange

The burned man turned towards his burned friend on the other trolley. He put his hand onto his friend's hand.

"J ... a ... k ... e!"

But that was his last word. He died, with his hand in the hand of his friend.

"Can you hear me? Jake, did you say?"

The nurse lifted the dead man's hand away from his friend's and laid it across his chest.

COMPONENTS:

- ◆ Reader
- ◆ Activity Book
- ◆ Teacher's Book
- ◆ Audio CD



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Life Exchange

Jenny Dooley

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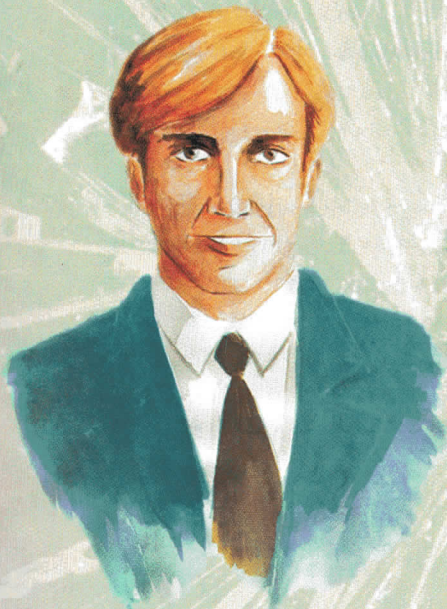
Luke and Jake



Luke



Megan



Jake



Nathan

Luke Harrison sat at his desk and looked through the door into the next room. His secretary was preparing the room for the directors' meeting. Luke smiled. On the table, the crystal glasses and golden cigarette box were shining in the light from the lamps. There were red roses to go with the red velvet chairs. Yes, the directors would certainly have a comfortable meeting. The smile left his face. He wasn't so sure of the discussions at the meeting. His partner, Jake Fulbright, was talking to him from the other side of the room. There was anger in his voice.

"Luke! Wake up! The office looks good, doesn't it? Our company is going well, isn't it? Together we've done a good job. And how? By always doing what's best for the company!"

"It's no good, Jake. You are not going to change my mind. Our business is property – land, houses and buildings. We became a great company because we gave the people what they wanted. And they paid us well. Now our city wants us and for a good cause. We have to give them what they want – a children's home. There is more to success than money, Jake. There is pride, and respect ..."

"Stop that! Our city needs an office block! And big companies will pay us good money. Think of your family, Luke. Don't you want to do the best for your wife?"

Jake took out a cigarette and lit it. Turn on

"If you're so keen on doing the best for yourself, why don't you stop that harmful habit?"



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Luke hated smoking and Jake hated being told what to do by anyone, even if it was his old friend and partner. The two men had grown up together, and built their futures together. And together they had found riches and success. But in the past year, something had gone wrong between them. What was it? Luke wished he knew.

"For goodness sake, Luke! Listen to me! I'm going to fight you on this one. I'm going into that meeting and I'm going to persuade those directors to agree to the new office building."

"I'm sorry, Jake. You can't do that. We are the partners, they are our directors. They can't agree to anything if we don't agree. Those are the rules, Jake."

"Rules are for losers! I'm a winner, and I take chances!"

Jake banged his fist on the table. Then he looked directly into Luke's eyes.

"He who dares, wins, Luke. Remember? And I dare!"

It was an old saying that the two men had used in the early days of their business. They had used the saying to give each other courage. Now Jake was using it to give him the strength to fight his own partner. Just then, the phone on Luke's desk rang. He heard his wife's gentle, loving voice.

"Is that you, Luke?"

"Yes, darling. How's it going at home?"

"Fine! But what's the matter? You don't sound too happy."

Dear Megan! She always knew if something was wrong. But she must not know that anything was wrong between Luke and Jake. Luke tried to sound happier.

"I ... I'm fine, love. Just a bit busy. You know - usual Friday rush to get things done before the weekend. How are things at home?"

in other words, he who takes risks wins.

"Pretty busy here, too! Nathan has brought a friend home from school - can't you hear them? They are playing upstairs. And I've got your favourite dinner - beef curry. It's nearly ready. So what time are you coming home?"

"Listen, Megan, love. I'm sorry, but I'm going to be late. There's a meeting this evening."

"Oh, Luke! Not again! Oh, darling, you've been working too hard lately. Try to get home and relax - we miss you!"

"I know, love. And I'll be home as soon as I can."

Luke put the phone down. He wished Jake hadn't been in the room listening to the conversation.

"You leave that gorgeous wife of yours alone far too much. If she was my wife, I would never leave her side." Nunca la dejas

There was something about Jake when he spoke of Megan - a look in his eye, and a strange tone in his voice. Luke couldn't explain why, but it made him very uncomfortable. But Jake was keeping a secret from his partner. Jake, the man with money and power but without a woman in his life, was in love with Luke's wife. Megan knew nothing of this. She loved her husband, her son and her home. Jake knew this, but Jake still wanted Megan.

"And he who dares, wins!" he told himself.

The awkward moment in the office passed. Just then, the intercom buzzed. Jake pressed a button and listened. It was one of the secretaries.

"All four directors have arrived. Shall I take them into the conference room?"

"Yes, please. We'll be with them in two minutes. Well Luke, this is it. They are all in there. And I'm going to persuade each one of them what is best for this company. Big luxury offices - that will bring us heaps of money."

amount of \$

Jake looked at Luke. He was daring him to answer. Then he picked up his cigarettes and walked out of the room.

