

# Beloved sister...

## Chapter 1

It was a misty day and dark clouds piled up at the horizon. It was drizzling and cold. Mira was crouching on a stone with her head on her arms. She was already wet, but she did not notice it. The trees were rustling in the wind, but there was no other noise. She was staring into the deep water of the lake without moving. Tears were running down her face so that she couldn't see anymore, but she didn't wipe them away. She closed her eyes and saw a face in front of her. It was a small face with blue eyes and shoulder-long blond hair. A typical face of a little Swedish girl. 'Lina. My dear little sister', whispered Mira with tears. 'Why did you have to die now? Why did you leave me alone? Please come back, Lina. Please!'

But she knew that her wish was impossible. A shudder ran through her body and she shivered when she thought of the evening when her family had got the information of Lina's death. That evening would stick in her memory forever. The police had not found Lina's dead body but her bicycle was standing near her favourite place in the forest, her own little woodhouse, which had been burned down. Her jacket was scorched and lay on the ground.

Mum's face became pale and she sat down when she heard the news. Then she began to cry and said again and again: 'My girl, my poor girl. How awful!'

Mira had never seen her father crying before that moment but she was sure that even her dad was crying. He was standing in front of the window staring outside a long time without saying anything. But when he turned around, a shadow was lying over his face and his eyes were shining damply. He came slowly to mum and Mira and took them in his arms.

'Probably she played with fire, because we found some pieces of candles. I suppose it was an accident. Maybe she forgot the candles and it began to burn. When she noticed the fire, it was too late and she couldn't go outside anymore', the police officer said and by that he finished the short moment of comforting silence.

'If you didn't find her body, it could be that she is alive, right?' asked Mira who did not want to admit it. 'That's very unlikely', he answered. 'But it could be!' Mira insisted on her opinion. The police officer just shrugged his shoulders. 'So what!', he said. 'Don't you think that it is important?' intervened Mira's dad.

'If she was alive, she would come home. Because she hasn't come up to now, we can suppose that she is dead', the police officer said impatiently.

It was clear to Mira, nevertheless she tried it again: 'But you are not sure. If she is in the forest and has lost her way, what then?' 'We have other fish to fry than searching for your sister who is probably dead,' he said indignantly.

Mira was angry about this impertinent statement. She would like to scream, but instead of that she ran out of the room and closed the door with a bang. Then she walked aimlessly straight ahead into the forest. She walked a long time without noticing the way. It was getting dark slowly. Finally she came to a lake, which was surrounded by many little and big stones. One of these stones was particularly big. There she dropped down despairingly and out of breath. 'What shall I do without you, Lina? How can I live without you? I miss you...', said Mira with a sigh.

## Chapter 2

Lina got off her bicycle and went quickly to her own `villa`, as she called the little woodhouse. She wanted to fetch her exercise book before she drove to her girlfriend Inga to do homework together. Already from a long way off she could see that something was wrong with her little house. Dense smoke was coming out of the windows and the roof was ablaze. `Fire! Fire!` Lina started screaming, but she knew that it was hopeless. She was approximately in the middle of the forest and nobody could hear her cry for help.

Really? Suddenly a heavy hand grabbed her shoulders and an unpleasant voice of a man said: `There you are!`

Lina jerked and wanted to scream and to turn around but the man pressed her to his body and held one hand over her mouth. She strove to wrestle out of his grasp and defended herself but she did not succeed. She felt panic-stricken and frightened. `Help!` she thought before everything became blurred and she had a blackout.

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When Lina woke up out of her unconsciousness, her whole body was stiff and hurt. Her head was spinning and she didn't know where she was. It was dark all around her. `What does that mean? Where am I?` she asked into the silence and darkness. She sat up and tried to discern something. Apparently she had been lying on an old and uncomfortably hard bed. Slowly and carefully she got up and felt her way along the wall. After a time she found a little window. A thick blanket was hanging over the window frame and it was closed with planks nailed on the house wall. Lina saw the moon shining weakly through the planks and outlines of trees, but nothing else was discernable. With trembling hands she opened the window and rattled at the planks. But nothing happened. `Keep calm`, she tried to cheer herself up, but her heart beat loudly. `At least it's getting light because of the moon,` she thought and looked around. There was a table, a chair and the old bed. Nothing else. Everything was made of wood and looked down-and-out. Near the table was a door. Lina tested if it was open but it wasn't. `Everything is shut and locked. I'm captured.` She made herself aware of it and she was filled with despair. The silence in this wretched room was frightening, therefore Lina hummed a Swedish song to drown out this ghostly silence, but sometime she gave it up. She sat down on the edge of the bed and began to cry bitterly until she was exhausted and fell asleep.

## Chapter 3

A few days later Mira got up early in the morning. She could not sleep anymore although it was just 5 o'clock and it was dawning slowly. The night had been terrible. At first she had been unable to sleep. She had tossed and turned in her bed but finally she had fallen into a restless sleep. Besides nightmares were

tormenting her again and again. Dozily she lumbered to her wardrobe and selected some clothes.

She got dressed, did her hair and went upstairs into the kitchen where she made herself a slice of toast with jam and drank half a glass of milk. After she had finished her little breakfast, she wrote a short message for her parents:

I'm outside for a while.  
Please don't worry about me!  
I'll be back soon.

Mira]

Then she slipped into her boots and her coat and took her rickety pink bike and pedalled along the way in the direction of the forest. 'If I remember correctly, it must be here somewhere...' murmured Mira and looked searchingly around. 'It must be that small forest path, I think.' she said to herself and steered her bike to the right side. When she arrived at a glade, she came to a standstill, leaped from her bike and left it leaning against a tree. Mira slowly approached the burned down hut which had once been Lina's villa. This sight was horrible and it gave her the creeps to think of her sister dying in the flames. 'I can't believe that you are dead. That can't be true' said Mira and searched for something in the ashes despairingly and with blind enthusiasm. She did not know exactly what she was looking for. Maybe for evidence that her sister was alive. And she really found something. But it was no evidence. It only was Lina's bracelet. She had got it as a present from Grandpa Bjorn to her last birthday. It had been her twelfth birthday and since that day, she had always and everywhere been wearing the bracelet. Mira looked at it lovingly and full of consternation. Many painful memories arose in her and she gulped down the lump in her throat. Then she put the bracelet into her pocket. 'What's that?' asked Mira and was both surprised and frightened. In front of her feet a cigarette-butt was lying. It was impossible that Lina had smoked these cigarettes. Somebody must have been here. But who? And what did he want here?' thought Mira and frowned. 'Maybe I'll find more suspicious things' she continued thinking. Although she searched intensively, she could not find anything else. 'How could I be so stupid?!' she asked herself and smote her forehead. 'Maybe this cigarette-butt is from one of the policemen... Why haven't I hit on it earlier?'

She was on the point of leaving when she heard voices which were coming nearer. For a short time she stood rooted to the spot, but then she quickly ran behind a bush and ducked herself. 'It's going like clockwork, don't worry about that.' Mira heard the unpleasant voice of a man. 'I don't know what you want to do with her, that's why I'm worried. The whole thing isn't OK. I won't be a party to that. That's kidnapping!' the other man answered. 'Don't talk such a twaddle! It isn't illegal', the first man muttered in his beard. 'It is not only illegal but also criminal', the younger one did not give way. He was tall, broad-shouldered and very handsome. Mira admitted that he was looking likeable. 'Stop!' the disagreeable man snorted with rage. 'I did not want you to snoop and find her. There is no sympathy; it's your own fault. Now you must bear the consequences. You are my son, Nicke, and you have to obey!' 'I'm not your son, I'm your stepson' corrected Nicke 'and I dislike

what you are doing.' His stepfather got out of control, seized him, boiling with rage, and pressed him forcibly against a tree.

Nicke opened his eyes wide with scare and retreated when his stepfather was suddenly brandishing with a pistol before his face. 'Shut up!' he threatened. 'You won't give away anything, do you understand?' 'I see' Nicke uttered but in his eyes Mira could see antipathy and contempt against this man. She trembled and dodged closely to the bush. 'Please don't!' Mira was on the verge of tears. 'OK' grumbled Einar, a bit more conciliatory, and took down his pistol. 'Then help me to find, if I have left anything striking by mistake.' Nicke obeyed unwillingly, but he thought: 'That's illogical and needless. The police was already here. Why does he waste his time?' The two men went around the glade and looked for something which could betray them. 'I must flee!' it flashed through Mira's mind 'Otherwise they will discover me ...'. She hastily looked round. Einar was just searching near the big spruce. She could not see the other man. So she plucked up her courage and tried to get back to her bike undiscovered to drive home on the shortest way. 'Now I'm out of the danger area' Mira thought when the glade was behind her. So she breathed a sign of relief. While looking back again to make sure that there was nobody behind her, Mira knocked against somebody. She uttered a low scream when she noticed that it was Nicke she had bumped into. She wanted to run away but he snapped her arm up. 'Who are you and what are you doing here?' he asked her sharply. 'I could ask you the same' she replied and tried to wrestle her arm from his control but he did not let go. 'I want to have an answer. What's your name?' he unflinchingly asked again and regarded her intently. Her face was heated and a bit reddened, her hair was curly and in a mess. She was svelte and about 1,70m tall. He estimated that she was between 17 and 19 years old. Her eyes were sparkling with anger. 'Get off my back! That's nothing to you!' she said in an angered voice. But he was just gawping at her. Mira was in an awkward position. 'What's the trouble? Why do you look like that?!' she asked but he did not answer. Instead of that he guessed more than asking: 'You have a little sister, right?' 'No, I haven't,' Mira said snippily. 'You can't fool me. You are looking very similar. How is she called? Lina?' 'What do you know about my sister?' Mira asked back. 'What have you done with her? You owe me an explanation!' But he did not get around to saying something because suddenly they heard footsteps behind them. 'Oh, no!' moaned Nicke aghast and let go of Mira's arm. 'You must get out of here! Run!'

Mira hesitated not one more second and blindly started running.

'With whom are you talking?' asked a deep dark voice.

'I'm talking to myself because I can't find anything suspicious and I'm asking myself how long we must search yet,' lied Nicke. Einar examined him critically. 'I thought there was another voice, too.' 'Then you were wrong. Here is nobody except me.' 'I hope you are right.' said Einar and furrowed his brow. Nicke grinned a bit aslant and he added ironically: 'It's going like clockwork, don't worry about that.'

## Chapter 4

Nicke was sitting in a black leather armchair and racking his brain. He always had this exceptional and beautiful young woman on his mind. He even did not know her name. But he was sure that she was Lina's sister and certainly she was

attached to her. Nicke commiserated with the two and he wished that he could help somehow. He had grown fond of Lina. She was very amiable. Every day he had to bring her the food and when they talked together she was like a little sister of him. What did his stepfather plan to do with Lina? He was up to no good... `Why don't I finger Einar to the police? Because he is my stepfather? I have never liked him... What prevents me from doing it?' he asked himself.

`Nicke, go and bring this food to the little cheeky brat. But don't come up with stupidity.' Einar interrupted Kale's thoughts. `What will you do with her? You can't confine her always. I have the right to know it.' `I see, but maybe it's better if you don't know it...' said Einar grimly `I can't depend on you.' Nicke nodded and thought: `Kidnapping is enough to press charges against him. He needn't do anything else with Lina.' Contemplatively he seized the tray and went outside. `I will get her out of this dangerous place no matter what happens.'

Nicke unlocked the door of Lina's prison, the old hut. `Good morning, Lina!' Nicke greeted. `It isn't a good morning' came the answer. `I am famished and I'm bored beyond belief.' `I can imagine,' said Nicke and gave her the tray. `Here you are, eat something... Tell me, what's your sisters' name?' `How do you know that I've got a sister?' asked Lina, chewing, but without waiting she answered: `Her name is Mira.' Her facial expression quickly changed. `Will I ever meet her again?' she asked sadly.

'I'm afraid, Nicke. I'm at a loss what to do. Please get me outta here! Please!' begged Lina. `Don't be down in the mouth! That's what I want to do. Can you give me Mira's mobile phone number?' he asked her. `I don't know it. But you could write an e-mail...' Lina proposed.

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Dear Mira!

Sorry, I didn't want to bother you but it's important. I'm the man you have met at the burn down hut. Do you remember me?

I got your e-mail address from your sister Lina. I can calm you, she is alive and kicking. She is kept imprisoned in an old, bedraggled hut in the forest near the lake Immelsjön. The way there is a bit complicated. Please phone the police. I can't do it because the kidnapper is my stepfather. His name is Einar Petersen. I know that's a lame excuse... I won't argue that point. But you must believe me, it's the truth! I don't know what he wants to do with her and I'm very afraid.

Yours, Nicke

## Chapter 5

`This afternoon, 15: 25 p.m? Right. Well, I don't know... Yeah. Yes, Dr. Lisander, our test person is fit. Don't forget to bring the medicines and the scalpel with you. And when she wakes up anaesthesia? Mmmh ... OK. All right! No, I don't think that he would assist in this operation...' Nicke had heard enough from the phone call. They were talking about Lina. She was in danger. `What time is it?' Nicke asked himself and looked at his watch. 15:15 p.m. There remained 15 minutes until Dr. Lisander would be there. Why did the police not come? Hadn't Mira read his mail? `Keep calm, Nicke!' he tried to calm himself but his thoughts came tumbling. It had to go quickly now. What should he do? In This emergency he had no better idea than taking Lina for a ride on his motorbike. He crept out of the room and grasped

into his pocket. 'Oh, no! Where is the key of the hut?' groaned Nicke but he could not find it.

So he ran to the hut without the key and put his best foot forward to open the door. Lina came to the window and looked at him. 'What are you doing?' she asked.

'We are attempting to escape,' he answered and fought with a vengeance against the door which knuckled with a loud crack under his force. 'Hurry up!' Nicke commanded and trailed her. Suddenly an angry voice resounded: 'What are you doing there?'

'Get on!' Nicke nervously said to Lina and jumped on his motorbike. Lina followed Nicke and climbed behind him. 'Ready to go?' Nicke started the motor. 'Hold fast to me,' he warned her and pulled out. 'Nicke! Stop driving!' Einar shouted but the motorbike speeded away. Lina could hear him curse beside himself with rage and she spasmodically clasped Nicke's body and closed her eyes. The wind was blowing hard into her face. 'I am free!' she thought happily. 'Don't halloo till you're out of the wood!' Nicke said as though he had read her mind. 'We haven't brought it off for a long time yet. I'm sure he will follow us. At the moment we have the lead Einar but he will overtake us. And I don't want to know what will happen then...' He was right. After a few minutes they heard the engine noise of a black car. 'Nicke, they are coming! We are doomed.' Lina cried in panic. Nicke did not answer. He stared sullenly and highly concentrated on the street. 'We have to manage it. They mustn't do anything to you. I'll have none of it. Over my dead body!' he assured her. 'We'll never make it.' Lina snivelled. 'We *must* make it!' Nicke already drove faster than the speed limit, anyhow he disagreed and accelerated. But they did not stand a chance. The black car rapidly came up to them. 'Nicke, he has a pistol!' Lina screamed.

Suddenly everything was going like the wind. A shot was fired. The motorbike slipped aside and canted. The black car braked sharply.

For a while everything was quiet. Lina opened her eyes. Her arm and her head were hurt, but it was not so bad. She looked around. The motorbike was lying in the roadside ditch and it was dented. Nicke was lying motionless next to it. Lina saw him and she was shocked and her head was swimming. Blood was oozing out of his shirt. His face was contorted in pain. 'Nicke? Nicke!' Lina hunkered over him. 'Please say something!' Nicke gave a loud groan, but he did not say anything. 'He needs an ambulance!' Lina exclaimed towards Einar, who got out of his car. 'That's bad luck' he said without sympathy and looked like the cat who ate the canary. 'You are not allowed to let him die!' Lina was filled with indignation. 'It doesn't make any difference to me' he said and wanted to catch her, but then he paused. From afar you could hear a police siren. 'Thank you very much indeed, Mira!' Lina sighed jubilantly. 'You have read his mail...'

Three police cars arrived. Mira was sitting in one of them on the co-driver's seat and looked worried. Before Einar could do anything, five policemen came quickly out of the cars and caught him. At first he struggled, but eventually he gave up. 'Nicke needs a doctor.' Lina said to one of these policemen who directly phoned the next hospital.

Now Mira got off the police car, too. Her eyes were filled with tears. They hugged each other, laughing and sobbing at the same time. 'I love you, little sister and I never want to lose you again. You can't imagine how scared I was that something might happen to you. It was really difficult to convince the police that Nicke's mail was truthful. I'm so glad that you are well. Everything is going to be alright now.' Mira whispered hoarsely and snuggled her sister. Then she broke her hugging and

went to Nicke. In the meantime the ambulance was there and a doctor had examined Nicke.

‘He will soon get well. Don’t worry!’ the doctor said confidently. Mira was assuaged. She kneeled down. ‘I’m deeply grateful for everything you have done.’ she said in a low voice. ‘Come to see me sometime when I’m in hospital.’ he said weakly. ‘Of course I’ll be there’ she answered and gave him a peck on his forehead. Nicke kept his eyes closed, but a smile was creeping up on his face. ‘What a wonderful young woman’ he thought, before he lost consciousness again and everything turned black.

-Melina Nietzsche –