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Antoinette Moses
Excerpt
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Chapter 1 *Get well!*

It began with a visit to the doctor. 'You need a holiday,' the doctor told me. 'You need a rest.'

'I can't take a holiday,' I answered. 'I'm too busy.'

'No, Liz,' said the doctor. 'You don't understand. If you don't take a holiday, you're going to get very, very ill.'

'I'm just tired,' I said. 'I feel tired.'

'No,' he said. 'It's more than that. Are you doing too much? You teach, don't you?'

'Well, yes,' I said. 'I'm teaching and studying archaeology at the university.'

'What else are you doing?' he asked me.

'I'm learning to speak Greek,' I replied. 'And I'm writing a book.'

'I see,' he said. 'You're learning to speak Greek, you're writing a book and you're working at the university. Don't you think that's too much? How many hours do you sleep at night?'

'Four or five hours most nights,' I told him.

'It's not enough,' he said. 'You need to slow down. Is your husband here in Greece with you?' the doctor asked.

'No,' I told the doctor. 'I was married but my husband left me. Last year.'

'I understand,' said the doctor.

'No,' I thought, 'you don't really understand. Because you don't know that my husband left me and went to live with one of his students. Because you don't know that I am

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still very angry. I am both angry and sad. You don't understand because you don't know that I had to leave London to be away from my husband who is still working at London University.'

Only a year ago everything was wonderful. I had a good job in London. I had a wonderful husband. I loved him and he loved me. Or I thought he loved me. But then I found out that he was actually in love with someone else. My wonderful world wasn't real.

But that was a year ago. Now I lived in Greece and had a job I enjoyed. And I had a wonderful, kind boss, Stavros. Stavros looks like a big animal and has a black beard. But he's a very good archaeologist. Sometimes I think that he can feel what is under the earth, even before he begins to look for it. And he's very kind. I love working for him.

After I left the doctor's I went to see Stavros at the university.

Stavros is very big man, but his office is so untidy that sometimes it's hard to find him. As usual there were pots and bits of pots all over his desk. Stavros knows almost everything about Greek pots. Every day I spend with him, I learn something. When I walked into his office, he was looking through a magnifying glass.

'Oh!' I said. 'You've got that pot again. That's great.'

Stavros put down the magnifying glass. 'Yes,' he replied. 'The police gave the pot to me this morning. Two men were trying to take it out of the country. The police caught them at the airport.'

'That's wonderful,' I said. 'It's a lovely pot. It belongs here in Greece. In a museum.'

One of the biggest problems for all archaeologists is

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stealing. As an archaeologist you want to find things because you want to learn about them. You want to learn about the people who lived in a place. You want to learn about the things they made. You can spend all your life looking at these pots and still learn new things. Pots tell you how people cooked and how they lived and what they did. But the people who steal just want to take the pots and make money. And usually they want to take them out of Greece.

Stealing is a problem for archaeologists in every country, but in Greece it's different. The problem is the sea. If you look at the things in the Greek museums, you will find that many of them were once under the sea. And there are still many wonderful things under the sea. So if you are rich and have a yacht, it's not difficult. You can dive and swim under the sea and if you find something, no-one knows. Archaeologists try to stop the divers. The police try to stop the divers. But it's not easy. The sea is very big and very empty.

I looked at the pot on Stavros's desk. It was two thousand years old.

Stavros was watching me. 'How are you, Liz?' he asked. 'You don't look well.'

'The doctor says that I need a holiday,' I told Stavros. 'But what shall I do?' I asked him. 'What about my students? What about my book? I can't just go away.'

'Yes, you can,' said Stavros. 'If the doctor says you need a holiday, then you must take a holiday. You must go. You're ill. Everyone can see that. You look terrible!'

'Thank you,' I said.

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Stavros laughed. 'You know what I mean. Of course you don't really look terrible. You're always beautiful. But you do look ill.'

I don't think that I'm beautiful, but I know that I can look quite pretty. I'm tall with long legs and long brown hair. In the sun my hair begins to go blonde and that always makes me feel better. Some people say that I look a bit like the film star Julia Roberts. Perhaps I'm a little bit like her. But only on a good day. I don't look like a film star when I'm tired. I just look ill.

'Do you want to go back to London?' Stavros asked. He knows all about my husband, but he never talks about it. I often spend my weekends with Stavros and his family. He has three young children and we have lots of fun together.

'No,' I said. 'I want to stay here. Perhaps I could stay at home for a few days and just do a little writing.'

'No,' answered Stavros. 'The doctor was right. You need to go away. Go to an island. The islands are so beautiful in April. Lots of flowers and no tourists. You can stay in my house on Sifnos,' Stavros said.

'But I couldn't . . .' I began.

'Of course you could,' Stavros said. 'My family and I go there every summer, but it's empty now. It's very small, but it's clean and it has a bathroom and a kitchen.'

'Are you sure?' I asked him.

'Of course,' said Stavros. 'And you'll love Sifnos. My house is in a village called Poulati. It's a fishing village. It's beautiful.'

'Are you really sure?' I asked again.

'Yes,' he said. 'Of course I'm sure.'

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‘OK then,’ I agreed. ‘I’ll go to Poulati. Thank you, Stavros. Thank you very much.’

‘Fine,’ Stavros said. ‘My good friends Eleni and Yiannis live there. They’re very friendly. I’ll ring Eleni now. She has the key and lives next door. She owns the restaurant in Poulati, the *taverna*. Her brother Yiannis is a fisherman. I’ll tell them that you are coming. Poulati is very quiet,’ he said. ‘It’s a very special place. There’s nothing to do there but rest and get well.’