



HAMPTON HOUSE

•

We wish you a pleasant reading! Yours Telegram channel @ADAPTED_BOOKS (https://t.me/ADAPTED_BOOKS)

Chapter one

The Helping Hand Club

William was busy as usual, in the building which was the office for Helping Hand. He worked there every Saturday morning. Today the building was full of teenagers, all waiting for someone to tell them what to do and where to go.

"Sally, Mrs Smith needs someone to collect her shopping."

Sally went to the desk and took the shopping list for Mrs Smith, then with a smile on her pretty face said goodbye and walked out of the office.

"John, Mrs Jones wants you to take her dog for a walk.

And be careful not to step on the dog this time."

"Gary, can you babysit for the Smiths this afternoon?"

"Jo, Mr Brown needs help in his garden."

The telephone never stopped ringing, but slowly, as time passed, the office became calm again. Most of the teenagers were out helping the people of the town, the rest were by the coffee machine. Someone switched on the cassette player and William sat in his chair more comfortably and closed his eyes.

"Hello."

William opened his eyes. A lovely girl stood in front of his desk, smiling.

"Hello, young lady. Who are you?"

"I'm Kathy. I'm new here and I don't know anybody, so I thought perhaps I could help you."

"You said the magic word. Help is always needed round here. In fact, as soon as Joan gets back, I'm taking the Library van to the Old People's Home and I need someone to help with the small trolley. Why don't you get some coffee and meet the rest of the group?"

Suddenly the door flew open and a tall, smiling girl came in.

"Sorry I'm late. Mr Tagg took a very long time to finish at the Foot Clinic. He's back home now, so here I am. Any problems, William?"

"Nothing serious, but we do have a new helper. Kathy, come and meet Joan. She's the manager here."

"William's taking me to the Old People's Home to give out the library books

- if that's all right."

"Lovely, but watch out! William is a terrible driver, so fasten your seat belt!"

"Don't believe a word she says. Bye-bye everybody. See you later."

"All right, but not too much later. We have a lot of things to do, you know!"

Everyone laughed as there was really not so much to do that day. William and Kathy walked out of the office and got into the van.

"Don't worry, Kathy. I'm a safe driver, and it won't take us very long to do this job."

Kathy smiled at William and looked at the busy street outside.

"I'm not worried about your driving, but it will take us a long time as there's a lot of traffic in the streets, today."

"All right then, let's hit the road!"

Chapter two

The Lady in Room 16

The Old People's Home was outside the town. When they arrived, William parked at the main entrance. He went to the back of the van and pushed a big trolley of books out of it. Kathy took the smaller trolley.

"I'll go to the main room downstairs and you take your trolley round the rooms to the old people who can't get out of bed. The matron will give you the room numbers."

Just then the matron arrived.

"Hello, William. They're waiting for you... but who's this?"

"Hello, I'm Kathy. I'm new at Helping Hand and William asked me to come here."

"Thank you for coming. They always like to meet new people from the town. This is the list of room numbers. Leave the lady in Room 16 last, because she likes to talk and feels lonely now that she has to stay in bed."

"All right."

William pushed his trolley into the large, sunny room on the left of the hall. Kathy pushed her trolley down a narrow corridor with doors on each side. The old people were happy to meet her and asked her lots of questions.

At last Kathy arrived at Room 16. She knocked on the door, and when a gentle voice called "Come in." Kathy opened the door and pushed the trolley into a pretty room, which at that moment was full of sunshine. An old lady, with bright blue eyes behind round, metal-framed glasses was lying in bed. Her hair was soft and white, shining in the sunlight. She smiled at Kathy. Kathy smiled back at her.

"Good afternoon. My name's Kathy Watson and I'm working at Helping Hand. I brought you some books. Do you want one?"

"I am Miss Emily. Nice to meet you. May I ask how old you are, Kathy?"

"I'm nineteen."

"Now, come here and let me look at you. Yes, you do remind me of a girl I knew long ago. She was very pretty, too. But enough of that. Please come and sit down on this stool beside me as I have many things to tell you and there is very little time left."

Kathy sat down beside the old lady. She felt calm and peaceful, but curious too. The old lady began to speak softly.

"I am very old now but when I was young I went to work in a big house. I worked in the basement doing the washing and ironing. Lord Hampton, the young master, lived alone, but many rich friends came to visit him and his parties were famous in the town. Hampton house was beautiful then. Bright lights shone in all the rooms. They made the wood on the furniture shine and the silver sparkle. The carpets were so thick your feet disappeared inside the wool when you walked on them... I was lucky. The cook let me have some food after Lord Hampton's meals came back to the kitchen, but his other servants were often cold and hungry."

"How terrible!"

"Lord Hampton wasn't a bad man, he just thought servants... No, he didn't think about servants at all. Rich people and his work, that was all he thought about."

"Do people still work there - cleaners, gardeners and maybe the young people from Helping Hand sometimes?"

"No. The house is old and needs lots of repairs. Nobody ever goes there now."

"And Lord Hampton?"

There was no answer from Miss Emily. Her eyes were shut and there was a smile on her lips - the kind of smile children have when they are keeping a secret, thought Kathy.

"Do you want a book to read?"

"No, thank you. Come and visit me again another day, Kathy."

Kathy stood up and quietly pushed the trolley to the door. She opened it, went out of the room and back into the narrow corridor.

"What took you so long?"

"Miss Emily. She told me about the days when she was young."

"Who's Miss Emily?"

"The lady in Room 16, the one you told me to leave last."

"But the lady in Room 16 is called Karen Black."

"That's strange. Maybe I got the name wrong."

"Come on then, we have to get back to work."

Back at Helping Hand, Joan asked Kathy to answer the telephone for a few hours. William left to help Mr Fisher paint his house.

At 2 o'clock, everyone returned to the office. Joan gave each of them a brown envelope with their name on the front. Joan gave Kathy an envelope, too. Inside, there was a five-pound note.

"Oh! What's this?"

"You didn't think you worked today for nothing?"

"Yes, I did."

"Joan started Helping Hand so the young people who don't have much money could find work and at the same time help people who can't do things by themselves. You see, we help the town's people and they help us, then everyone is happy! Do you want to come to the dance here tonight?"

"Oh, I didn't see any notices about a dance. How do you know there's going to be a dance here tonight, William?"

"There's a dance here every Saturday night for the people from Helping Hand and any other young people who want to come. It's fun and you'll meet new people. So, will you come to the dance?"

"OK then, I'll come. Thank you for asking me, William."

"See you at 8 o'clock outside the office, then."

Chapter three

The Dance

That evening Kathy took a long time to dress because she didn't know what to wear. She finally put on her best dress and shoes. Then she brushed her shoulder-length fair hair until it shone. A last look in the mirror showed a slim girl with happy brown eyes, her oval face framed by soft curls.

William stood at the end of the road and waited. When he saw Kathy, he hurried to meet her.

"Hello again! Ready to go?"

"Yes, let's go!"

Together they went into the building. It was full of young people. Some girls were in mini-skirts and T-shirts, others in long, bright dresses. Most of the young men wore jeans, T-shirts and leather jackets. Everyone wanted to enjoy themselves. William greeted his friends, then invited Kathy to dance the moment the music started. They danced nicely together. And when the music stopped, a girl with soft brown hair and shining brown eyes came near them.

"This is Sue. Sue, say hello to Kathy!"

"Hello, Kathy! Nice to meet you. Come and meet the rest of the crowd."

Just then, a tall young man came forward. He held his glasses in one hand and a handkerchief in the other.

"This is John. He always cleans his glasses when he's thinking. He's terribly clever, so he cleans his glasses a lot."

"My hair falls across one eye when I'm angry."

She looked into his kind green eyes and didn't believe he could ever actually get angry.

"Here comes Pam! You hear her before you see her, because she's always laughing."

"Are you talking about me?"

"Yes."

"I hope it was something nice."

As she smiled her grey eyes shone. A young man went near her.

"Hello. My name's Adam."

"Glad to meet you. I'm Kathy."

"Would you like to dance?"

"I'd love to!"

For the rest of the evening, Kathy danced and talked to her new friends, and William enjoyed himself, too.

"Last dance."

"My dance!"

William led Kathy to the dance floor. As they were dancing Kathy took a look at her face in a mirror. Her cheeks were pink and her eyes were shining.

After the dance was over, William and Kathy went home, walking through the streets of the town which were now quiet.

"See you tomorrow then, Kathy."

"See you tomorrow, William. Bye-bye!"

Every Saturday, Kathy and William worked at Helping Hand. Kathy enjoyed doing the odd jobs around town. She even sang for a pop group because their singer was sick. And then she had to serve drinks and food to the guests at a garden party, but the name of the house was "Pine Lodge" not "Hampton House" as she had hoped.

One Saturday, she and William helped Mr Jones build a fish pond in his garden. As it was a very hot day they decided to jump into the pond to cool off a little after so much hard work. Mr Jones looked at them and said that he would have to put the fish in the pond the next day.

On days when there was no work to do, they played Monopoly and

Scrabble and had a lot of fun together. William also taught Kathy to cycle.

One day Joan asked Kathy and William to take the van to the Old People's Home. Kathy visited the rooms on the matron's list. Number 16 was not on the list.

"Where's the lady from Room 16?"

"She's gone away. By the way, I found an envelope, with your name on it, left on the floor of Room 16. Here it is."

Kathy opened the envelope and took out the piece of paper inside. "VISIT HAMPTON" was all it said. She put the paper in her pocket.

"Was she a friend of yours?"

"No, but I liked her."

Then, as there was nothing else to do in the Old People's Home, Kathy followed William out to the van.

Chapter four

The Accident

Autumn turned to winter. In the regular Saturday morning meeting, Joan clapped her hands and asked everyone to be quiet. Everyone stopped talking and looked at her.

"The Council is going to pull this place down, so we have one month to find a new meeting place. Has anyone got any ideas?"

The room was silent.

"Well, if we want to keep Helping Hand, we must find a place for our office, so get onto your bicycles or motorbikes and start looking..."

"This is your chance to ride your bicycle out in the countryside."

Kathy had an old bicycle she'd bought from a friend at Helping Hand. At the moment the bicycle was at the bike shop. William's friend George wanted to mend the brakes before Kathy went out onto the busy roads.

"We'll go on Sunday. We can join the others and have a picnic."

Kathy got up early on Sunday morning and walked to the shop to collect her bicycle.

"Hello. You're up early, aren't you?"

"Yes. We're going on a picnic today, so I need my bicycle."

"Well, the new tyres are on and the front brake works, but today I wanted to mend the back brake. It's not working properly."

"Oh, never mind. I'll ride slowly and I'll try to be very careful with the front brake."

"It's very dangerous to use the front brake without the back one. If you put it on too hard, you'll fall off."

She still didn't know how to ride her bicycle very well, but she wanted to go on the picnic more than anything else.

"Show me what to do, then I won't be in any danger."

George got onto the bicycle and rode round Kathy, then he put on the front brake. The back wheel of the bicycle moved to the side and George nearly fell off.

"Now you see what can happen."

He pushed the bike over to where Kathy stood.

"Yes."

"Now you try, but this time use the front brake gently."

Kathy rode slowly round George, then gently put on the front brake. The bike slowed, then stopped.

"That's it, but remember, you have no back brake. Your bicycle is dangerous."

"Thank you, George. And don't worry, I really will be very careful. That must be William and the others."

"Well, have a good time and bring your bicycle back here tonight, so then I can fix it properly."

"Goodbye and don't worry."

She got on her bicycle and went to meet the others. They all started cycling together towards the countryside.

"Is everything all right?"

"No problem."

At the end of the road, there was a hill. They all cycled slowly up that hill and Kathy pedalled harder to catch up with them. At last, they got to the top.

"Who wants to race me down the hill?"

They started going down the hill. They were going faster and faster and William was singing loudly.

"This is like flying!"

Kathy's bicycle zoomed down the hill. Suddenly, Kathy saw a crossroads at the bottom of the hill. A lorry was coming slowly from a side road moving into the main road. Gently, Kathy put on the front brake of her bicycle, but it just slowed a little, it didn't stop.

"Put your brakes on, Kathy!"

"I can't! William... Help!... Oh, my God!"

Kathy froze with fear. She saw the look of horror on the lorry driver's face just before she crashed into the side of his lorry. Then, for a moment, everything went black.

Chapter five

Life or Death

Kathy heard people shouting, and then the sound of her bicycle wheel spinning round. She opened her eyes and saw William's face, among other faces, looking down at her. Finally, she felt the pain all over her body. It slowly spread from her head to the rest of her body. It was so bad she could hardly breathe. A siren sounded in the distance. William, who sat on the road next to her, gently lifted her head.

"You shouldn't move her. The ambulance is coming now."

"This is a bad one. We'll take her now."

"Can I go with her in the ambulance?"

"She won't know you're there, but, get in if you like."

"Don't worry about your bike. We'll bring it to the hospital."

"Thanks."

William climbed into the ambulance and sat down near Kathy. He felt terrible. In fact, he was shaking. Kathy looked so white and there was a deep cut on her head.

At the hospital, William was walking beside the stretcher, praying for Kathy's life while tears filled his eyes. The nurse came up to him.

"Wait here, please."

"Will she be all right?"

"I'm sure she will. You should drink a cup of sweet coffee. It's good for shock - you look terrible!"

The nurse brought William some coffee. He drank the hot coffee slowly. The long wait had begun...

Slowly the young people from Helping Hand started coming into the hospital. At first they talked to William, but he didn't want to talk. He only wanted Kathy to be well, happy and laughing again as she was a while ago on the way to the picnic. One hour passed, then another. The young crowd left, but William sat quietly and waited... the clock ticked on the wall and the hands moved round, then round again. William hated that clock! Then the door opened and the doctor walked up to him. William couldn't speak or even breathe.

"Are you William?"

"Yes. How is she?"

"A nasty bump on the head, some cuts and bruises, but nothing broken. She's awake now and wants to see you. Ah, she also shouted the name Hampton House. Is it her home?"

"No, it isn't."

"She must stay in town when she leaves the hospital. No long journeys on

trains or buses."

"I'll make sure she stays in town - but can I see her now, please?"

"Yes, yes, she's waiting for you."

Kathy smiled shyly at William. He looked tired and his T- shirt was covered in dirt and blood. He sat down on the chair next to her bed.

"How do you feel? You gave me an awful fright."

"Much better now. The doctor says I can go home tomorrow."

"Yes, he said you're fine. He also told me that you said something about a house called Hantom, Hanton, or something like that."

"Hampton House! A lady I met in the Old People's Home said she used to work there once."

A nurse came into the room.

"It's time you went, young man. Come again tomorrow and take her home."

"Goodnight, Kathy. See you tomorrow."

"Goodnight, and thank you William."

Kathy relaxed and closed her eyes. She thought about the old lady's story.

"Who was the old woman? Why did she tell me about her past? She seemed to know me but I had never seen her before. Rich masters with lots of servants have not been around for a long time. And the old lady looked so old! This Lord Hampton - can he still be in that house? Why did she give me the invitation? Oh, it's the bump on my head that makes me feel confused. The man must be over 100 years old. The house is probably empty."

With this last thought, Kathy felt very calm. When the nurse opened the door a few moments later, she was pleased to see that Kathy was asleep.

Chapter six

Hampton House

For the next few days Kathy stayed quietly at home. In the evenings, people came to visit her and told her about the search for a new meeting place. Everyone in the town was helpful, offering their garages, garden sheds or even their spare rooms, but none of the places were any good as an office for Helping Hand.

"That's it then. Helping Hand will have to close."

"What about Hampton House? An old lady at the Old People's Home was telling me about it. Maybe it's just what we need for an office as it's been empty for years."

"It's worth a try. You never know..."

Two days later, William found some information about the house. He told Kathy that it was near the Old People's Home. He had checked on an old map of

the town and found out where it was.

"We're going there this afternoon. Do you want to come, Kathy?"

"Of course. You can't leave me behind!"

It was a warm afternoon. Kathy sat behind William on his motorbike and waved to the crowd from Helping Hand. They wanted to come and look round the old house, too. After a long ride they finally saw its old wall with tall iron gates in the middle of it. Some energetic young people climbed up onto the high wall while others looked in through the gate.

Kathy saw a wild garden with old trees covered in ivy. The house was exactly as she had imagined it, except the roof had fallen in. The windows were covered in dirt and dust, and they were cracked from the stones children had thrown at them for fun.

"It's falling down. What do you think Sue?"

"It does look dangerous. Where are you going Adam?"

"I'm going to have a look round."

Adam jumped off the top of the wall into the garden. Everyone watched in fear as he tried to walk across the wild garden to the house. Suddenly, he came back to the wall and climbed quickly over it to the road.

"Snakes! The garden is full of snakes!"

"That's it, then. We can't use the old house."

"I'm not afraid of snakes."

Before anyone could stop her, Kathy climbed up to the top of the wall, and jumped down. Carefully, she walked across the garden to the heavy wooden front door. She bent down and cleared the stones and earth from the bottom, then she slowly turned the big brass handle to open it. The door opened just enough for Kathy to get inside, then it closed behind her.

Kathy was in a large room. The walls were cracked and peeling, the ceiling hung down in places and the floor was covered in dust. The few floor boards that showed, looked worm-eaten and dangerous. Kathy saw a great staircase covered with spiders' webs and a small mouse sitting on the bottom step. Quickly, it jumped away in a cloud of dust. Kathy became so frightened that she couldn't move. She was ready to leave the house when she saw a large table and four chairs. There was no dust on them. A candlestick stood in the middle of the table with a lit candle in it. Kathy went closer and, at that moment, she heard "the voice".

"Please sit down, Kathy."

Strangely, Kathy felt relaxed and comfortable when she heard it. She sat down on the nearest chair and waited. A plate of delicious food appeared in front of her. It was hot and smelt delicious. Kathy felt hungry, so she picked up the

heavy silver knife and fork. And soon, her plate was empty. It disappeared, and a bowl of strawberries and cream arrived in its place.

"Lovely! Thank you! I never could say no to food."

"Our time together is not ended. Please, come to the house another day, Kathy."

She accepted the invitation, then carefully stood up from the table and walked round the room, keeping close to the wall, until she reached the front door. It opened easily and she was outside again in the bright sunshine. The crowd gathered round her.

"What happened?"

"Is the house any good for our meetings?"

"Why did you stay in there so long?"

Kathy told them about the clean table and chairs, about the lovely meal and about "the voice". She saw the way they looked at each other and she knew they didn't believe her.

"Come on, Kathy! It seems the bump on your head is more serious than we thought."

"If there's free food inside, I'll go next time."

Everyone relaxed and laughed as they walked away from the old house.

Chapter seven

The Investigation

Kathy woke up the next morning and saw that it was raining when she looked out of her bedroom window. She ran downstairs and across the road to William's house.

"Are you going to the old house today?"

"Yes, I'm going with John and some of the others. But you can come too, if you like."

"Yes, I do want to come with you!"

The old house looked more frightening than before. It was difficult for William and John to climb the wall because it was wet and slippery. Kathy waited at the gate and watched them walk across the garden. They went to the front door and together they pushed hard, but it wouldn't open. Then, they walked to the side of the house looking for a window to climb through. William looked for a rock to break the glass and John climbed into the house first. It was cold and dark. There was dust everywhere and mice ran across the room. The hole in the roof let the rain in onto the ruined floor. The wind made strange sounds, too. John walked further into the room just as William climbed in through the window.

"Can you see anything?"

"No. There's no table here, the room's empty. I wonder why Kathy made up that story. I think that this house makes her say funny things. She's so much different when she's away from here."

They climbed out through the window and across the garden to meet Kathy.

"Well? What's it like in there? Did you see anything unusual?"

"The whole place is a mess. The floor is rotten and the walls are falling apart. The roof, as you can see, is ruined."

"Did you hear 'the voice', or see the table and chairs?"

"There was no table or chairs either. There's nothing in there. Kathy just made the whole thing up. Don't ask me why."

Without waiting for Kathy he started the motorbike and rode away down the road. The others stared at her, then walked away from her and got onto their bicycles. Kathy was now alone outside the old house.

Slowly and carefully she climbed the wet wall and got into the garden. She walked up to the front door, turned the doorknob and stepped inside.

The room smelt damp. The table and chairs were not in the room. Kathy was ready to leave when she suddenly saw two armchairs on either side of the fireplace. There was a small table beside one of them. Kathy walked slowly across the room. She reached the back of the chairs and looked to see if anyone was sitting in one of them. She was really scared as she did so, but fortunately both the chairs were empty.

Suddenly, a gentle wind came into the room and made the old, torn curtains move. She turned round and called to the empty room.

"Please, let me see your face Lord Hampton!"

There was no answer. The room was silent and Kathy, even more scared now, stood quietly beside the empty chairs. After a long silence, which made Kathy more nervous, "the voice" spoke again. Kathy looked towards the sound but she could see nothing.

"Please sit down, Kathy, and make yourself comfortable." She sat in front of the brightly burning fire and waited. She forgot about William and the others at Helping Hand.

"I have a gift for you. There's a box on the table next to you. Do open it!"

Kathy carefully opened the box. Inside, there was a small diamond heart on a chain.

"Put it on, then I must explain why the heart belongs to you."

Kathy put the chain over her head. Then she sat quietly and waited.

"The voice" echoed round the room as the story began...

Chapter eight

Lord Hampton's Story

"When I was very young, I lived in a village where the people were very poor. I worked on a farm picking fruit and planting vegetables...

Every day, at lunchtime, a young girl brought me fresh bread and some cheese to eat. She was a very pretty girl and she wore a beautiful diamond heart round her neck. This jewel was so pretty that I could not stop thinking about it. Late one night, I went to her house, sneaked in and stole the diamond heart which was beside her on a pillow.

The next morning, I left the village. I sold the diamond heart and I used the money to buy clothes. Then I went to work for a rich old man. I worked hard for many years and became very close to him. I often thought about the girl whose diamond heart I had stolen, but I never went back to my village to see her. One day, the old man asked me to visit him in his house. He said to me, 'I have no family. You are a good man and I want you to have my business and this house. After I die, everything I have is yours.'

Soon after he died. I inherited his money and became a very rich man. Everyone called me Lord Hampton and were afraid of me as I had become a cruel master who treated people in a terrible way.

One day, the girl whose diamond heart I had stolen years before came to my house. She was cold and hungry and needed work. Now the time had come for me to help her, just as the diamond heart I had stolen from her had helped me in the past. After all, I owed her so much! But instead, when I saw that she did not recognise me in my fine new clothes, my cruel self-made me send her down to the basement, where she had to work long, hard hours.

Every day she had to carry water from the well, boil it in huge pots and then wash my clothes in it. Then she had to hang them outside to dry and press them with the heavy iron. She worked hard all day for a bowl of soup and a piece of dry bread. Then, exhausted, she slept on the wet floor for a few hours. The only person that gave her some happiness was a kind young man who finally married her. When this happened, I felt sad for some time because I had memories from the time we were both young and poor and she cared for me so much. But my sadness quickly went away. What did I want from a poor miserable girl? My house was beautiful, I had many rich friends and there was always good food on my table; so, you can imagine my surprise, when years later, when I was an old man, the girl came to me in a dream and said:...

'Many of your servants have died of cold and hunger. The ones who lived to be old were sent away when they could not work anymore and they, too, died of hunger. Now YOU must suffer before you can find peace. You will know when

the time has come, because a young girl will come to your house. If she eats at your table and you speak to her honestly of your past cruelty and selfishness, then you will be free to leave this house and find peace.'

In the morning I found the diamond heart on the pillow beside me and I knew it had not been a dream! Soon, what she had told me became true. All my servants were old and tired. One by one they left but no new ones came to work for me. My beautiful house started falling apart. My rich friends no longer wanted to visit me.

For endless years, I have wandered from room to room, always waiting for a young girl to come and free my soul from its suffering. Now, I can finally find peace."

There was a long sigh after "the voice" stopped speaking. Kathy felt cold and lonely as she stood in the middle of the empty room. Suddenly, the fire went out.

"Don't leave me here alone!"

Kathy cried, but there was no answer. She walked slowly across the dark room to the front door. There, she turned and looked once more at the two chairs beside the fireplace. Then she left the house. It was still raining and nobody was waiting outside the gates for her. Kathy felt lonely and sad as she walked home.

Chapter nine

A Matter of Choice

William telephoned Joan early on Friday morning.

"Hello."

"Joan I must speak to you."

"Why don't you come to the office, William? It's not open today so we'll have time to talk."

William hurried to the office and, after Joan unlocked the door for him, he sat down opposite her in front of the big desk.

"I need your help. It's about Kathy and the strange happenings at Hampton house. Kathy's never been like this before, but every time she goes near that house she seems to be a different person. I don't believe in ghosts. Maybe the accident she had makes her see things. Kathy is special to me, but I'm afraid she's not the Kathy I knew anymore."

"I thought you might want to talk to me about that. Kathy told me once that her mother died when she was very small and she had never seen her grandmother. So, I went to the Old People's Home and asked some old people who remembered Kathy's grandmother. They told me that when she was young, she used to work for Lord Hampton. So maybe Kathy's grandmother was the girl

with the diamond heart."

"Joan, I came to talk to you because I thought you were a logical person. It seems that I've made a mistake".

"I believe that something happened to Kathy in that house, and if she's really special to you, then you must believe it too!

If you can't do that, then let her go. You have until the meeting tomorrow to decide."

The next day was Saturday. Kathy walked slowly along the road to the offices of Helping Hand. She knew that the young people there were angry with her, especially William.

The room was full of young people talking or sitting quietly waiting for Joan to tell them where to go. William was in a corner of the room with his close friends around him. He turned his back to Kathy, but Joan hurried over to her.

"Hello Kathy. How are you today?"

"I feel much better, thank you."

"Come over here to my desk. I have something to say to these young people and I want you beside me."

Confused, Kathy followed Joan and sat down near her desk.

"Attention please! As you all know, we haven't found a new office for Helping Hand yet, but we will finally find one. Sadly, I won't be here to help you. I'm moving away from this town, but there are many good people here to take my place. Today you must vote for a new leader. I've chosen three people I think will do the job well. William Owen, Sally Brown and John Holt. If you all agree, then please write the name of the person you want as a leader on a piece of paper, then put your paper in the box on my desk."

After everyone had voted, they returned to their jobs. Kathy's job that day was to answer the telephone. When the office was quiet, Joan turned to Kathy.

"That old house we saw - Hampton House - it's being pulled down today."

"No!"

Kathy jumped up from the chair. She ran outside feeling that she had to visit the old house one more time.

Chapter ten

The Final Moments

Kathy could hear the noise before she got to the house. She saw lorries blocking the road outside it and workmen walking in and out. Then she saw the bulldozers. They were breaking the windows and the wooden balcony. Soon, the rest of the roof fell in a cloud of dust.

"Poor Lord Hampton! Now he'll be in that old house forever. I came too

late... Now I can't do anything to help him."

The bulldozers were ready to pull down the rest of the house. A moment before they did so, Kathy saw a blinding light rising slowly above the house. For a moment, the house looked the way it did in the past, full of glamour, then it fell to pieces. Only dust, bricks and stones were left where once the beautiful home of Lord Hampton had stood. Kathy looked at the light shining in the air. It became dimmer as it travelled higher. Then she thought she heard "the voice" call...

"Goodbye, Kathy. Goodbye."

"Have a safe journey, Lord Hampton! Goodbye..."

"Move along, Miss! It's dangerous round here!"

Kathy smiled at the workman. Suddenly, she felt very happy. She did not go back to the Helping Hand office. Nobody telephoned her or came to her home, but Kathy didn't mind. She waited quietly for a message or sign. It came, at last, through an article on the front page of the local paper, which began with the words...

Kathy tore the newspaper into small pieces and threw them out of the window. The wind lifted the pieces high into the air. She didn't even look at them. The past was over, and now she was in a hurry to get to the new Helping Hand office. She wanted to see her friends again, but most of all she wanted to see William.

Meanwhile, William was reading the same article at home. When he finished, he tore his newspaper into pieces and threw them into the dustbin, then he took his coat and left. He walked down the road whistling as he went. Then he saw Mrs Smith coming out to collect her milk from the doorstep.

"Good Morning, Mrs Smith!"

"There goes a young man in love! Best of luck William!"

It was the day Helping Hand was going to move to the new offices. The old building was full of people who were anxious to help, but it did not take more than a moment for William to realise that Kathy was not there.

Suddenly, he felt miserable. He sat in his chair and closed his eyes.

"She's right, of course. Who would want to be with a selfish person like me... I almost called her a liar and I wasn't there when she needed me."

"Are you speaking to me?"

"Kathy... I'm so sorry about what happened! I was selfish and cruel to you, but I promise you'll never be lonely or afraid again."

William took Kathy's hands into his and looked into her eyes. She looked back at him.

"Hampton House was..."

"Forget Hampton House. It's part of the past."

"Yes, but if we have any future together ... I mean, if we have a future together..."

"Oh Kathy, I want that more than anything! But can you forgive me for the way I acted? I will never doubt you again!"

"Of course I will, William."

"Oh, Kathy. I love you so much!"

"I think that's everything?"

Sue, with one of the removal men, was looking round to see if everything had been cleared away. She saw William and Kathy holding hands, looking into each other's eyes.

"Well, you'd better put those two in the van. It's the only way we'll get them to the new offices."

They both turned to look at all the people watching them. William threw his head back and laughed. So did everyone else, their joy full laughter filling the building for the last time.

- THE END -

**Even more cool books like this one on our Telegram channel
@ADAPTED_BOOKS (https://t.me/ADAPTED_BOOKS)**