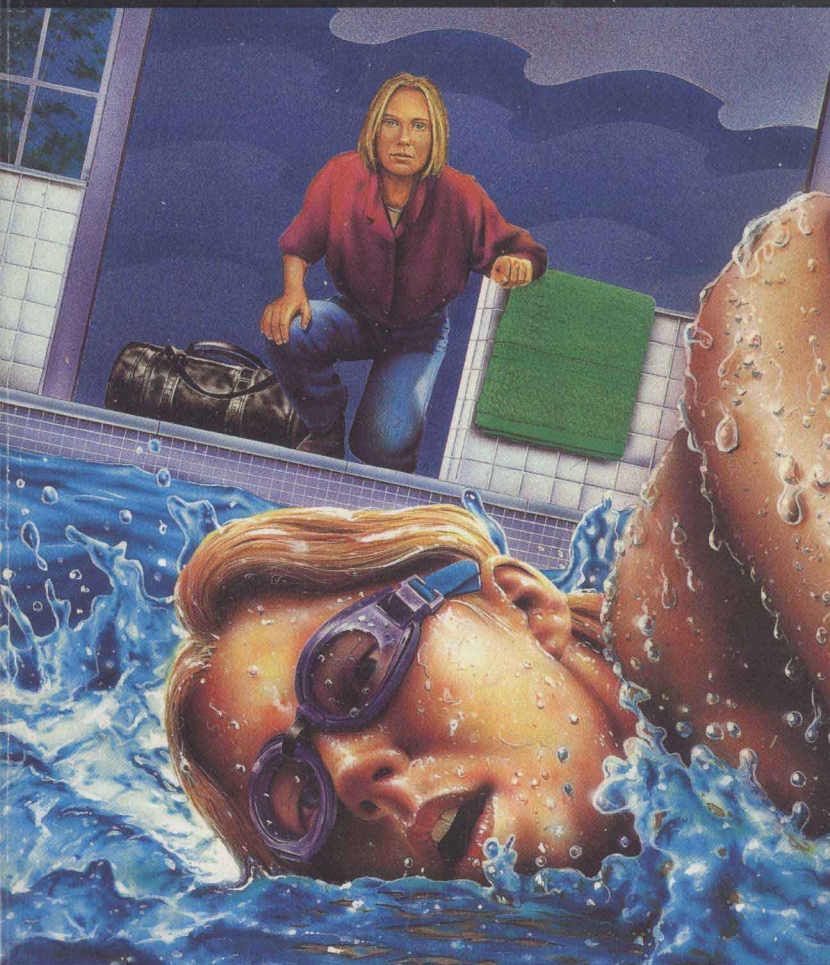


St Jo's Hospital



Shattered Dreams

Sue Welford

pollinger limited
authors' agents
9 staple inn
holborn
london wc1v 7qh

Shattered Dreams

Emma could see a girl lying on the ground, a man sitting next to her holding his head. A couple of other people lay motionless where they had fallen from the carriage.

Some of the spectators were staring, spellbound, too shocked to move. One was speaking rapidly into his mobile phone.

'Let me get through.' Emma was shaking like a leaf as she bent over one of the victims. A girl, lying like a broken toy, legs twisted, a huge gash on her pale forehead.

Emma went cold with shock.

It was Helen.

Text copyright © Sue Welford 1997

**First published in Great Britain in 1997
by Macdonald Young Books
61 Western Road
Hove
East Sussex
BN3 1JD**

All rights reserved.

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

The right of Sue Welford to be identified as author of this work has been asserted by her in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All characters in this publication are fictitious and any resemblance to real persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

**Photoset in Dorset
by Dorchester Typesetting Group Ltd
Printed and bound in Guernsey
by The Guernsey Press Co. Ltd**

ISBN: 0 7500 2228 0

St Jo's Hospital

5

SHATTERED DREAMS

•

Sue Welford



MACDONALD YOUNG BOOKS

St Jo's Hospital series

1

Dangerous Obsession

2

Harmful Intent

3

Desperate Measures

4

Lucky Escape

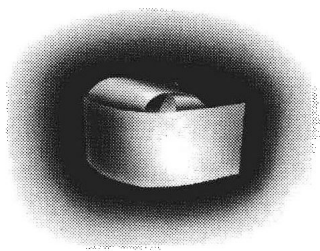
5

Shattered Dreams

6

High Hopes

. 1 .



‘Can I help you at all?’ Junior Staff Nurse Emma Taylor asked the young woman she’d met wandering along the hospital corridor.

The woman, obviously pregnant, was carrying an enormous handbag. She spread her hands and smiled at Emma gratefully.

‘*Mais oui,*’ she said. ‘Yes... please.’ She spoke with a heavy French accent. ‘I am

looking for the ante-natal clinic.' She looked down at herself and her smile widened. 'I am sure that is obvious.'

Emma grinned back at her. 'You're going in completely the wrong direction. Look, I'm going past the clinic, come with me if you like.'

The hospital was like that. A maze of corridors to anyone who didn't know it. When Emma first went to work there she got lost lots of times before she learned where everything was.

'Thank you so much,' the woman said. 'I am already ten minutes late.' She told Emma all about herself on the way.

'This is our first baby,' she said, flicking back her long blonde hair. 'It is due next month. We are very excited.'

'Do you want a boy or a girl?' Emma asked.

The woman shrugged. 'We do not mind, as long as it is healthy.'

They were almost there.

'Third door on the right,' Emma said pointing.

'*Merci*. Thank you very much.' The young woman hitched her bag up under her arm and smiled gratefully.

'You're welcome,' Emma said. 'Good luck with the baby.'

Emma turned and almost barged into someone coming the other way.

'Emma! What are you doing in this neck of the woods?'

Emma's friend, Sue Jenkins, stood there grinning at her. Sue was one of Emma's flatmates. She had dark curly hair sticking out wildly from under her cap and deep-set eyes that sparkled mischievously as she smiled.

The two girls and their other flatmate, Penny Brown, had been at nursing college together. When they qualified as nurses they all got jobs at St Josephine's Hospital Trust in the town of Ashton. The hospital was known as St Jo's for short.

Emma worked in the Accident and Emergency Department, Sue in Buttercup, the children's ward, and Penny had a job on Primrose, one of St Jo's busy surgical wards.

'We're fairly quiet so I'm running an errand for Simon.' Emma showed Sue the sheaf of notes she was carrying.

Dr Simon Young was one of Casualty's senior house officers. He was tall, had

blond hair that curled into the nape of his neck, and intense blue eyes. He had been a great help to Emma during her first few weeks at St Jo's and since then they had become good friends. More than good friends. In fact everyone else seemed to think they were an item, although Emma was too intent on her career to get seriously involved with anyone.

'Quiet?' Sue raised her eyebrows when Emma told her there hadn't been many patients in her department that morning. 'I didn't think it was ever quiet in Casualty.'

'It is sometimes,' Emma said with a grin. 'Usually on my day off!'

Sue chuckled.

'Do you still want to go swimming this evening?' Emma asked her. 'Or are you just going to put your feet up in front of the telly?'

'Who me? You've got to be joking, of course I'm coming.'

Sue was very sporty. Jogging, aerobics, squash... Emma didn't know where she got the energy from. Emma liked swimming and jogging but wasn't fanatical about exercise.

'Who else is coming?' Sue asked.

'Simon, hopefully,' Emma said. 'That's if I can persuade him to come. He's done forty hours already this week and looks totally shattered.'

They were outside the lift that would take Sue up to Buttercup on the third floor.

'He could always sit and watch.' Sue pressed the button.

'Oh, that'll be real fun,' Emma said sarcastically. She rolled her eyes. 'I'm sure he'd enjoy watching us enjoying ourselves.'

'Well, it's up to him if he wants to be a couch potato,' Sue said.

Emma didn't have time to wait for the doors to open. 'I'd better go.' She waved the notes in the air. 'These are Matthew's and he's already in a tizz because they weren't where he expected them to be first thing this morning.'

Sue grinned. 'Are things ever where he expects them to be?'

'Not very often,' Emma laughed.

Matthew Groombridge was the casualty consultant. He was a big man and had a booming voice to match. It was well known that his bite was worse than his bark.

Even after all these months Emma was still half afraid of him. If she didn't hurry up he'd be on the phone to Simon asking where the notes were, then Simon would wonder where *she'd* got to. She had already been gone longer than expected but at least Mark wasn't around to tell her off.

Mark Hunter, one of the charge nurses in Casualty, had taken six months out to work in an inner city hospital in New York. Even though he'd been a stickler for the rules, Emma had come to think of him as a friend and in a strange kind of way she missed him.

Mark's replacement was due to start the following week. His name was Jason Cowley. Emma had caught a glimpse of him when he came to look round the unit. Short and stocky with a receding hair line, Emma had heard he'd been working in Australia for a year before getting the job at St Jo's. Simon said he seemed OK but didn't mince his words. Well, Emma had thought when he told her, so what's new?

The lack of casualty patients had lulled the staff into a false sense of security. When Emma got back the place was like Piccadilly Circus. Jean Baker, one of the

receptionists, was trying to deal with a long queue of people.

Most of the chairs were already taken and there was a man lying on the floor, moaning. He had a bottle in his top pocket and it was obvious he was drunk. Marilyn Butler, one of the unit's other SHOs, was trying to persuade him to get up but she wasn't having any success. Finally she gave up and called to Jean to ring for Security.

Sister Rosemary Page, the triage nurse, was almost tearing her hair out. She collared Emma as she went past. It was Rosemary's job to sort out casualties in order of priority.

'Emma, there's a little girl in cubicle 5 with a chronic nosebleed.' She handed her a form. 'Her name's Tiffany Brookes. Her mother's been making a terrible fuss about having to wait. Could you see to her?'

'Yes, sure,' Emma scanned the child's details. Emma caught sight of Simon talking to an Asian woman. When he saw her he left the woman and came to speak to her.

'Did you deliver those notes?'

'Yep,' she said.

Simon frowned. 'Damn, I sent down a set that should have been kept up here.' He ran his hand through his hair. 'I don't suppose you could go and get them back?'

She shrugged ruefully. 'Sorry.' She explained about Tiffany's mother kicking up a fuss.

Simon sighed and glanced at the clock above the status board. 'OK, I'll go myself.'

In the cubicle, the little girl was sitting on the side of the bed holding a wad of blood-soaked tissue to her nose. She had blood all down her clothes and her face was streaked with tears. Her mother was sitting beside her with a face like thunder.

'At last!' she said when Emma appeared. 'We've been waiting ages. Tiffany could have bled to death!'

'I'm sorry,' Emma said. 'As you can see we're really busy.'

'I reckon some of those people come here just for a cup of tea.'

Emma bit back a sharp retort. If only the woman knew!

'We'll soon sort you out,' Emma said to Tiffany. She took the tissue from the little girl's hands and threw it into the bin. Then she gently pinched together the soft parts

on the bridge of Tiffany's nose. Then, noticing the bleeding had almost stopped, she got a swab and started cleaning the blood off the little girl's face.

'We've been sitting in here ten minutes!' Mrs Brookes said.

Emma almost told the woman that she couldn't have been. Ten minutes ago the place was practically deserted. Instead she bit her lip and said nothing. She'd learned very quickly not to put her foot in it when patients were getting stressed.

'There,' Emma wiped around Tiffany's nose. 'It's stopped. I think you're going to be OK now.'

'I suppose you're going to tell me I shouldn't have brought her?' Tiffany's mum said sulkily.

'No, you did the right thing,' Emma told her. 'Nosebleeds that go on for more than ten minutes should always be checked. But Tiffany's fine now. Bring her back if you have any more trouble.'

Mrs Brookes helped her daughter off the bed and swept out.

'Well, thanks very much, nurse,' Emma said to herself. She cleared up and went out to see who was next.

Emma felt exhausted by the time she came off duty. She had only managed to grab a ten-minute break with Simon at lunchtime. Just time to stuff down a tuna sandwich, confirm he *was* coming swimming, then get back to the grindstone.

In the kitchen of their flat, Emma wrenched off her cap and threw it on the worktop. She peered in the mirror, combing back her short blonde hair with her fingertips. She screwed up her eyes then frowned.

‘I’ve got bags under my eyes.’

Penny was there, sitting at the table drinking a huge mug of coffee. The mug said ‘Glasgow Rangers’ on the side. Penny’s whole family were Rangers fans.

The three friends each had a bedroom of their own and shared the big kitchen. There was a communal lounge in the nurse’s block but they seldom used it. They preferred instead to gather in the kitchen.

‘Ach, if they’re bags then mine are suitcases,’ Penny said. ‘Four shifts without a break, it’s a wonder I’m not wandering around like a zombie.’

‘Is Simon picking us up tonight? Or are we going in Poppy?’ Sue asked. She was