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Excerpt
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Chapter 1 *A strange meeting*

I was walking home from my office one January evening. It was a Monday. The weather was very cold, and there were some low clouds around the tops of the buildings. Once I'd left the main road, there weren't many people in the dark, narrow streets of Budapest's Thirteenth District. Everything was very quiet. It felt as if the city was waiting for something.

As I walked I thought about what had happened at work. I had argued with one of the Hungarians I worked with. It was the first serious problem since I'd arrived. I was trying to think what to do about it, and I was also hoping that my wife, Andrea, had made one of her nice hot soups for dinner.

After about five minutes it started to snow heavily, so that the streets were soon completely white. As I was walking along a very dark part of one street there was the noise of a door shutting loudly inside a building. Then I heard the sound of someone running.

Suddenly, the street door opened and a man came out of it and ran straight into me. I fell over into the snow, shouting something like, 'Hey, watch where you're going!' – my words were loud in the empty street. The man turned to look at me for a moment. 'Sorry,' he said very quietly, in Hungarian, before walking quickly away.

What I saw at that moment, in that dark winter street was very strange, and I felt very afraid. Because what I saw was *me*. *My* face looking down at me. *My* mouth saying sorry.