



BROKEN SPIRIT

CHARLES L. FIELDS

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Although this is a work of fiction, the island problems are real. My protagonist, Charles Stone, employs solutions and makes proposals based solely on my imagination. The cover design displays the Hawaiian state flag upside down. This depicts not only the international sign of distress, but also protest.

Broken Spirit

By

Charles L. Fields

Chapter 1

Hawaii called.

I had not been back to the islands in over 10 years, but the magic still pulled deeply as I thumbed through the travel brochures. Two recent life threatening assignments for Franklin Life Insurance Company involved operating in Arizona, Mexico and Utah. The exposure to drug cartels, arms smuggling, murders and a sadistic crazed self-proclaimed prophet for a polygamist's sect of the Mormon Church had left me physically and mentally beat. My abuse of food and drink was also taking its toll on my 50 year old body. It was time to go and I, Charles Stone, lawyer with the Boston firm of McGraw Stone & Tucker, needed to find relaxation and perhaps a true inner self. It was my time and I would not let anyone get in the way.

The Christmas and New Year season had ended and the few decorations which had brightened up the Beacon Hill townhouse and given satisfaction to my neighbor, Yvonne Bernard, were stored away for another year. Completion of my new alabaster sculpture, *Good and Evil* would have to wait. The need to travel for personal pleasure was perhaps selfish and compulsive, but I had neither chick nor child and when taking into consideration the cold weather and a slow caseload at the law office it made perfectly good sense. I made a note to have my secretary, Mary Simmons, make travel arrangements in the morning and call Robert White, President of Franklin Life to postpone his complimentary offer of the company's health spa and fitness program. A more self disciplined approach would have to be employed when in Hawaii. When studying the brochures an initial plan was formalized. I would fly to Oahu and use Honolulu as the home base. This worked well in the past and made island hopping more practical. Short flights and car rentals would allow me to freely explore Kauai, Molokai, Maui, and the big island, Hawaii. The more I thought of it the more excited I became and felt the need to call Ingrid Swanson in Arizona.

I met Ingrid when staying at the Camelback Inn in Scottsdale after my ordeal with Luke Simon, the demonic prophet of the Mormon Church. Along with being a professor of Microbiology at Arizona State University, she was the personal fitness trainer at the resort. Despite going against house policy we became close personal friends and my final week in Arizona was filled with many blissful touristy adventures. Sex did not enter the picture. Not that I didn't try to win over this blonde statuesque beauty, but her consummate interest in a privately funded research project on muscular degeneration was too strong a competitor. We talked of seeing each other again when she came to Boston for an international seminar

at Harvard. When this was mentioned to Mr. White he expressed interest in possible funding of this project by his company.

I called Ingrid. The juices of travel and island adventures were flowing and I really had a need to talk. The holidays without family or feeling not part of a family always left a void. I had been invited to the homes of my partners and parties by clients, neighbors and friends, but the need to unwind from an assignment took precedent. The wait seemed interminable as the message went through the calling sequence. Finally when she answered, I was at a loss for words.

“Hello Ingrid, it’s Charles Stone wishing you Happy New Year again. I never did take the walk in Boston Common or go to the “Top of the Hub” to celebrate, but I did read the book you recommended on *Holiday Excessive*. You will be proud to know I ignored the book’s recommendation and practiced my own common sense.”

Ingrid laughingly replied, “Charles it is so nice to hear from you. I will be coming to Harvard on the 12th of January for a week long conference and would love to see you. Maybe we can pick up where we left off? I received a letter from the president of Franklin Life expressing interest in my research project and their interest in providing funding. There will be a meeting with his committee on the 15th and you have been invited. I think it is an invite you cannot refuse, so do not disappoint me.”

“Ingrid, Mr. White is a Mormon family oriented romantic who is concerned about my not being married. His intentions go far beyond science. I, however, am a true believer in scientific research and would love to be there with you.”

“Consider it a date.”

“By the way I am making plans to go to Hawaii at the end of January for a month and if you can fit part of the itinerary into your busy schedule I would like to have you as a traveling companion. What do you say?”

The long pause on the phone signified either a questioning yes, maybe or no. I waited patiently.

Ingrid finally replied, “Maybe. Let’s see how things go during my Boston/Cambridge visit.”

The reply was both cold and calculating, but nevertheless promising and I planned to do all I could during this visit to make paradise for two a reality.

“You’re welcome to stay at my townhouse. It’ll give me the opportunity to return the hospitality you showed me in Arizona.”

“Thanks for the offer, Charles, but I have already made reservations at the Copley Plaza. The hotel has a shuttle bus, but it would be nice to be met by you at the airport and escorted to town in a grander style.”

“Perhaps we can plan dinner near the hotel and you can fill me in on Mr. White and Franklin Life’s research funding.”

I was delighted at the thought of making these arrangements and quickly responded, “Great! Great! E-mail your itinerary and I’ll meet you at baggage claim. I’ll even have the Mercedes cleaned and vacuumed in honor of your arrival.”

Goodbyes were said with a simple anticipated, “See you soon.”

I was keeping to my two martini regimen, but tonight warranted a nightcap. After all a beautiful bright woman was coming to Boston for a week and I would be her escort. It

also gave me the chance to concentrate on wooing her into joining me on my Hawaiian vacation.

Before retiring to bed I turned on the nightly news and was alarmed to hear of the brutal beating of two white enlisted army men returning to the Schofield Barracks Army Base in Hawaii after a night on the town.

The reporter kept repeating, "They don't think it was racially motivated, however underlying tensions run high in this paradise melting pot. It is believed this lone incident will probably not affect tourism but it adds to the unrest."

"Leaders of The Kingdom of Hawai'i secessionist movement, Nou Ke Akua Ke Auponi O', refused to comment."

I recalled a similar incident several years ago in 2008 when a U.S. veteran of Iraq and his wife were beaten in a mall parking lot on the Big Island.

What was to be a night of blissful sleep and dreams of Ingrid turned into a nightmare.