Tittle: 35 Opowiadań Psychologicznych – 35 Psychological Stories
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Książki z serii "Reading for English Learners" przeznaczone są dla osób, które znają już dobrze język angielski, ale chcą doskonalić jego praktyczne zastosowanie, a także uczyć się nowych słów dzięki ciekawym tekstom napisanym stosunkowo prostym i powszechnie używanym językiem angielskim.

„35 Opowiadań Psychologicznych" to opowiadania, w których dwoje psychoterapeutów z Londynu; Anne Wonderby oraz Anthony Ballard, rozwiązują typowe dla współczesnego społeczeństwa europejskiego problemy psychologiczne swoich pacjentów. Książka jest przeznaczona dla psychologów, studentów psychologii i miłośników psychologii.

Autor ma nadzieję, że te historie przypadną do gustu Czytelnikom i pomogą im pogłębić znajomość języka angielskiego.

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11. MAJOR DEPRESSIVE DISORDER (MDD)

Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) [zaburzenie depresyjne nawracające] is a serious mental disorder characterised by a profound lowering of mood and a loss of the ability to experience pleasure (anhedonia) lasting at least two weeks. This condition drastically impairs daily functioning and stems not from ordinary sadness, but from neurobiological and psychosocial disturbances. Key symptoms of MDD include chronic fatigue, sleep and appetite disturbances, feelings of worthlessness, difficulty concentrating, and; in severe cases, recurrent suicidal thoughts [nawracające myśli samobójcze].

* * *

Anne Wonderby's consulting room smelled of a cold fireplace and cedar. It was an interior designed to absorb the anxiety of others; soundproofed with soft rugs [wyciszone miękkimi dywanami], bathed in diffused light [skąpane w rozproszonym świetle], and cut off from the clamour [zgiełku] of the London street outside. Anne, a psychotherapist with twenty years of experience, adjusted her glasses and looked at the woman sitting opposite her. If a photographer appeared in the room at that moment, the shot would have been perfect for the cover of a glossy magazine: Olivia Spendlove. The face of a morning TV show, an icon of natural grace, a woman with whom millions of Britons drank their morning coffee. She sat in a leather armchair with one leg tucked beneath her [z jedną nogą podwiniętą pod sie-

bie], wearing a fuchsia cashmere sweater. Her face wore the same radiant, magnetic smile Anne knew from the screen.

'It's a truly lovely place, Anne. I can call you by your first name, right?' Olivia laughed brightly, giving a casual wave of her hand.

'Wonderful energy here. You can feel the moment you walk in that you're helping people get back on their feet. I actually just dropped by for a quick check-in, you know? A little maintenance visit [krótka wizyta "konserwacyjna"]. My manager says I've been working too hard lately and should talk to someone. So, here I am!'

Anne didn't smile back. Not out of a lack of empathy, but out of respect for her craft. Years of work had taught her to look beneath the surface. She saw Olivia's flawless makeup, but she also saw the concealer [korektorka] under her eyes desperately trying to hide dark, plum-coloured circles. She heard her high, melodic voice, but she also registered the micro-tremours, the sharp gasps for air between sentences, and the trembling of fingers gripping a porcelain mug of water [rejestrowała też mikrodrżenia, gwałtowne łapanie powietrza pomiędzy zdaniami i drżenie palców zaciskających się na porcelanowym kubku z wodą].

'I'm glad you're here, Olivia,' Anne said calmly.

'Your manager noticed your fatigue. But what did you notice?'

'Me?' Olivia spread her arms wide, as if presenting a prize to an audience.

'Oh, the usual! Life in the fast lane. Sometimes you just have

an off day, right? You wake up and think: "Uh-oh, gotta double up on the coffee today [dzisiaj kawa musi być podwójna]". But then I walk into the studio, the red tally lights on the cameras flick on, and, bam!; the endorphins kick in. I love my job, really. It's just… sometimes, in the evenings, I feel like someone's pulled my plug. You know that feeling? Just a total physical crash.'

Olivia spoke rapidly, juggling anecdotes from the set [żonglując anegdotami z planu], cracking jokes, and rattling off the names of producers. It was a torrent of words; a formidable barrage erected to keep everyone at bay [To był potok słów, potężna zapora ogniowa wzniesiona po to, by nie dopuścić nikogo bliżej]. A classic defense mechanism. In clinical psychology, this symptom had an unofficial, painful name: "smiling depression"; masked depression where the smile becomes a suit of armour [pancerzem].

Anne waited patiently. She let Olivia talk for another fifteen minutes, watching as the presenter's energy subtly waned [subtelnie opada] with every word she spoke. Maintaining the facade was exhausting; it demanded a massive expenditure of cognitive and emotional energy. When Olivia paused for a moment, searching her memory for another amusing story, Anne lowered her voice, introducing a safe, grounding gravity into the room.

'Olivia, what happens when the cameras go off, you go home, wash off your makeup, and are left alone in the silence?'

That simple question struck Olivia's carefully constructed edi-

17. AMYGDALA HIJACK

Amygdala hijack [porwanie przez ciało migdałowate] is a sudden, intense emotional reaction; disproportionate to the situation, over which a person loses all conscious control. The term was introduced by the psychologist Daniel Goleman to describe a situation where the amygdala (the part of the brain responsible for survival) takes command before the rational prefrontal cortex has time to analyse the facts. It manifests as a violent outburst of anger, aggression or paralysing fear, triggered [wywołany] by the evolutionary fight-or-flight mechanism. Once the emotions subside, the affected person often feels deep regret and guilt [żal i poczucie winy], unable to understand their own behaviour.

* * *

The clock on the wall of Anthony Ballard's consulting room ticked with an irritating, almost mechanical precision. The room, quiet and decorated in muted shades of gray and deep green, was designed to soothe the senses. Yet for the man sitting opposite the therapist, that sterile silence felt like a taut wire [napięta struna].

Jerry Sammarby didn't fit the soft velour armchair. Broad-shouldered, with impeccably trimmed hair and hands clasped so tightly his knuckles [kłykcie] had turned white, he resembled a sculpture ready to explode at any moment. Although dressed in civilian clothes, Ballard could easily spot the cop [glinia-

rza] in him; he betrayed himself with the habitual, vigilant way his eyes scanned the doors and windows.

'I shouldn't be here,' Jerry began. His voice was low, rough, and laced with barely concealed frustration. 'I should be on duty.'

Anthony Ballard adjusted his glasses, closely observing his patient's body language; his pen remained motionless on the clean notepad.

'I understand that this forced leave is a difficult situation for you, Jerry. However, your superiors decided that a month off and this therapy were conditions for your return to the force. Will you tell me what happened?'

Jerry took a deep breath, but his chest rose and fell sharply, as if he were starved for air.

'A standard domestic call. Routine stuff, doctor. A drunk guy, shouting, a crying woman. I've done it hundreds of times. But that guy... suddenly, he threw a glass at me. He missed. It shattered against the wall...' The officer broke off mid-sentence [przerwał w połowie zdania]. He looked at his hands as if they belonged to someone else.

'And what happened next?' Ballard asked gently.

'I don't remember anything. I mean... I remember a flash. Like someone had cut the power to my brain and left only a red emergency light on. I heard a terrible roaring in my ears. My heart was pounding as if it were about to burst through my ribs. In a split second, I was on him. I knocked him to the

ground. I started hitting him. Not just to subdue him [Nie żeby go obezwładnić], doctor. I... I wanted to destroy him. My partner, Hicks, had to physically pull me off. He was screaming at me to stop, but I couldn't even hear him. It took about two minutes for things to return to normal. I saw blood, a terrified woman, and Hicks looking at me as if I were a monster.'

Anthony Ballard nodded with deep understanding. To psychology students analysing this case, Jerry's behaviour would be a textbook example of an evolutionary trap.

'What you're describing, Jerry, isn't the proof that you went mad with hatred,' Ballard said, leaning slightly toward the patient. 'What you experienced is known in neuropsychology as an amygdala hijack, a takeover of your emotional state by the amygdala.'

Jerry looked up, his eyes a mix of anger and helplessness.

'A hijack? By whom?'

'By your own brain,' the therapist explained.

'The amygdala is a primal [pierwotna] structure in our limbic system; one that is incredibly ancient in evolutionary terms. It is your internal guardian, an alarm system. Its sole task is to ensure your survival. When you heard the sound of breaking glass, your amygdala interpreted it as an immediate threat to your life. Before your logical, rational brain; the prefrontal cortex, could even analyse the situation and conclude: "Relax, it's only a drunk guy, you've got this under control", the amygdala had already made its decision.'

light of the London day; ready for whatever fate might bring.

  

24. GRIEF WORK

Grief work [praca nad żałobą] is an active psychological process involving the emotional and cognitive processing of loss in order to adapt to a new reality. This concept posits that navigating grief is not a passive state [Pojęcie to zakłada, że przejście przez żałobę nie jest stanem biernym] but requires effort; confronting painful emotions, accepting the irreversibility of the loss [nieodwracalności straty], and gradually redefining one's identity and life goals. From a psychological perspective, the aim of this work is not to forget the deceased or the lost object of attachment, but to reframe the bond with them [przeformułowanie więzi z nimi] so that emotional energy can once again be invested in life and future relationships.

* * *

The clock in Anne Wonderby's consulting room did not tick; it was an unobtrusive electronic model, tucked behind a lush potted ficus so it wouldn't nervously count down the minutes for those who already felt as though their time had come to an irreversible standstill [że ich czas bezpowrotnie się zatrzymał]. For the woman sitting on the coarse, graphite-coloured sofa, time

had indeed frozen several months ago.

Wynona Dullaby was a shadow of her former self. A modest black dress hung loosely on her frame, bearing witness to the weight she had lost in recent weeks. Her hands; bare of rings save for a simple gold band, were unconsciously twisting a tissue that had already been reduced to a damp, crumpled ball [wilgotną, ściśniętą kuleczkę].

Anne Wonderby adjusted her suit jacket and looked at her patient with warm, calm expectancy. There was no rush in her consulting room; she knew that grief work requires time for pain to find its own words.

'I don't know where to start, doctor,' Wynona finally said. Her voice was quiet and hollow, as if echoing from the depths of a well. 'Actually... I don't know why I'm here. After all, you won't bring him back to me. No one will.'

'Yes, nobody will, Wynona,' Anne replied gently. 'And we won't pretend otherwise. I'm here to help you bear this burden before it crushes you completely. Will you tell me about him?'

The memory hit Wynona with the force of a wave, wringing a quiet sob from her chest.

'Thomas was... he was everything. Our marriage wasn't perfect, but it was real. We loved each other the way people do in old movies; with absolute, boundless trust. When he came home from work, the house came alive. He was my safe haven, my love, my best friend. And now, there's just this mon-

strous silence pounding in my ears. I wake up at four in the morning, reach for his side of the bed, and feel nothing but cold sheets. That's when I feel like my heart is breaking.'

Anne Wonderby nodded, carefully noting the woman's every gesture.

'Losing that great love leaves a huge, painful void. It's natural to suffer. But grief has another, more mundane [przyziemną] side too, doesn't it?'

Wynona flinched, and in her eyes; alongside the sorrow, there appeared a paralysing, sheer terror.

'How do you know? Yes... Thomas was more than just my heart; he was our only financial anchor. He ran an architectural firm and managed everything. I took care of our home and the children. I never had to worry about bills. Now the firm is being liquidated, the accounts are partially frozen due to probate formalities [z powodu formalności spadkowych], and I... I have two growing children to support. Sandra is sixteen, Roger is fourteen. They're growing up; they need clothes, textbooks and school fees.'

The woman buried her face in her hands, her shoulders shaking with sobs.

'The worst part is having to pretend to be strong for them,' she continued through her tears. 'Sandra shuts herself in her room and listens to music for hours, while Roger has become aggressive; throwing things and letting his grades slip [tu: opuścił się w nauce]. They miss their father too, and I can't help

Susanne smiled one last time, turned on her heel, and walked out of the room with a brisk, light step. Once the door had closed, Anne Wonderby walked over to the wall and looked at a picture hanging askew. Instead of correcting him, she smiled to herself, sat down at her desk, and placed the asymmetrical fork right in the center of the smooth tabletop; an eternal monument to the won battle for human happiness.





27. MORBID JEALOUSY

Morbid jealousy [Chorobliwa zazdrość] (also known as pathological or delusional [urojeniową] jealousy, or Othello syndrome) is a mental disorder characterised by a strong, irrational, and unshakable conviction [niezłomnym przekonaniem] of a partner's infidelity, despite a complete lack of evidence. The affected individual obsessively seeks confirmation of their suspicions (e.g., by checking the partner's phone, stalking or interrogating them), and their behaviour destroys the relationship, causing immense suffering for both parties. In extreme cases, it takes the form of systematised delusions that cannot be corrected by rational arguments.

* * *

Rain lashed against the tall windows of the Harley Street con-

sulting room, blurring the silhouettes of London taxis darting by [przemykających] below. Inside, however, a semi-darkness prevailed, dispelled [rozproszony] only by the warm glow of a floor lamp. Anthony Ballard took a sip of bitter tea and looked at the man sitting opposite him.

Stanley was around thirty-five years old, wearing an impeccably tailored suit; his fingers were nervously intertwined, and he kept fiddling with his wedding band. For the first ten minutes, he remained silent, staring at the Persian rug as if seeking salvation in its patterns [jakby szukał w jego wzorach ratunku].

'I shouldn't be here,' Stanley finally began; his voice, though rough, trembled with suppressed anger. 'I'm only here because my wife, Melanie, has lost her mind. She gave me an ultimatum: either this visit, or divorce and moving out. Do you understand? Blackmail.'

Anthony Ballard adjusted his glasses, nodding gently.

'I understand that you feel forced to make this visit. It's a difficult start. Will you tell me what led Melanie to make this decision?'

Stanley snorted, though a genuine fear of losing the woman he loved more than life itself flickered in his eyes.

'She claims I'm sick. That I'm destroying her with my jealousy. But how can I not be jealous, doctor? Melanie is a manager at an international corporation. Beautiful, intelligent, climbing the career ladder. And constantly surrounded by men. Those "business lunches" of hers, "networking events", "busi-

ness partners”... To me, they’re just guys waiting for an opportunity.’

‘Has Melanie ever given you a real reason for concern?’ the therapist asked calmly.

‘No, not technically,’ Stanley snapped, glancing away toward the window. ‘But the devil is in the details. Recently; two weeks ago; they had a company banquet. I saw that new regional director of hers; some slick, polished type, put his hand on her back while they were talking. Maybe it lasted a second, maybe a second too long. I lost control. I walked over and made a scene in front of everyone. I told him to his face what I thought of such “management methods”, and in front of her subordinates [jej podwładnych], I called Melanie something she isn’t. I screamed. I humiliated her terribly.’

The man buried his face in his hands. For a long moment, the only sound in the room was the monotonous patter of rain against the windowpanes.

‘When we got home, she didn't cry,’ Stanley continued, his voice quieter now, stripped of its earlier bravado.

‘She was terrifyingly calm. She sat at the table and said that was the last time. That my jealousy was a monster devouring our relationship, and that if I didn't get help, we’d end up in court and she’d move out.’

Anthony Ballard paused, letting the words hang in the air of the room.

‘Stanley, what you’re describing; the constant anxiety, the