

### **Chapter 3**

*["Must be a dream world--but I can't wake up?"]*

A black limousine with mirrored windows pulled up to the entranceway of the Cook County Hospital. The smartly uniformed chauffeur stepped out onto the soggy snow, his polished black oxfords crushing chunks of slush. In gusty chill, he hurried around the long limo to open the right passenger door. Royce's daughter, Susan Richards, dressed in warm sable with matching hat, was lifted out into the biting wind and carried from the slush to dry pavement. Mutual affection appeared rather obvious between Susan and her muscular driver.

"Thank you so much, Charles. Now, we should not be more than an hour or so. I'll call when we need you." Susan was

fair, middle aged, and petite with a sharp, striking profile that could swiftly change from sweet to stern.

She waved to her passenger, still inside, and shouted, "Come along, Wilburn." Dr. Wilburn Wells stepped out, lifted his trench coat collar, and rushed through the "Windy City" slush. He was somewhat uneasy about Susan's use of his first name, especially since he had been so careful to refer to her as Ms. Richards. He followed her through the automatic doors of the hospital.

Inside, Susan brushed and loosened her fur--then reached up and daintily straightened Wells' lapel.

"When you are finished here, Wilburn, Charles will take you back to your car. I can't thank you enough for leaving your car at your office and riding here with me. I desperately needed your company."

"Ms. Richards, I must check on some matters with an associate, Dr. Hoffman. He is a noted psychiatrist. As soon as I brief him, we will come up to your father's room. You go ahead. Take Elevator C, to the 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Room 517. Until we get there, just tell him that I will be there shortly. Try to get a conversation going. See if there are any signs of recognition. If there is any trouble, call the nurse. We will be there shortly."

"Well," said Susan, "we don't get along so hot, you know. I hope he doesn't start yelling at me."

"He won't," said Wells. "He seems very detached. Just be calm and receptive. Let him do the talking. Don't even tell him who you are. Be pleasant. Let him try to remember things."

Susan took off her sable and folded it around her arm. "I'll do what I can, Wilburn. Please hurry, just in case I mess up somehow."

*It's Dr. Wells damn it,* he thought, and then curtly responded, "You'll do fine."

Wells turned and walked away down the busy hall.

Susan then searched for and easily found Elevator C.

\* \* \*

Susan entered the ward and, at the Nursing Station, inquired if she could visit Mr. Royce in Room 517.

"Mr. Miller, not Mr. Royce, is in 517."

Not wanting to argue the point, Susan said, "Why yes, of course, how silly of me. Uh, which way please?"

"Three rooms down on the right."

Susan found 517, and much to Clyde's surprise, casually opened the door, and strolled toward his bed with a smile.

"Hi there sweets!" she said.

Clyde rubbed his nose to cover his disfigured face. "You got the right room?"

"Yes darling, I'm a friend of Dr. Wells. He asked me to come visit. Mind if we talk a bit? And listen, you needn't worry about your looks. Wilburn will fix that. He's quite the plastic surgeon, you know."

Clyde moved his hand away from his face, and in a more relaxed tone, said, "That's what they tell me. Please excuse the teeth braces. Now, eh, what is it you want?"

Susan looked directly at Clyde: "I guess you don't remember me?"

"Should I?"

Susan sat on the edge of his bed and leaned over so that he could see her more clearly.

"Yes, I would think so."

Clyde scanned, but didn't recognize anything about her.

"Why?"

Susan became impatient. She blurted out, "SCOTTLAND ROYCE! Now, please--promise you won't yell at me."

"Scottland Royce? I'm sorry, but I am not of that name. You can call me Clyde Miller. That's as good a name as any right now."

Susan broke down, sobbing. "No! You are my father, Scottland Royce. You have been missing for several months. My goodness, I've been worried sick about you. Please, please try to remember. I'm your daughter."

Clyde stared at Susan, finding nothing about this stranger that would remotely lead him to believe she was his daughter. However, he wanted to calm her down, so he began to talk about what he did remember.

"I have no daughter your age. Ah, well--that is--I can't recall such. I once thought I had a baby son, but that--that was just in a dream."

"Dad," said Susan. "My God, you're over seventy years old. You have only been missing a few months. How could you have a baby son?"

"I don't know," Clyde said with an expression of dismay. "It's--it's possible."

Susan grabbed a tissue from the nightstand and patted her eyes. "Dad, you've lost your memory, but please believe me. I know for certain. How could I not know my own father? You are *Scotland Tyler Royce*--and I am your only child, *Susan Amanda Royce Richards*."

Dr. Wells entered the ward first, followed by Dr. Brent Hoffman, a tall, smiling sort with dark brown hair and a gray-streaked beard. They approached the foot of Clyde's bed without a greeting. Hoffman took the clipboard, and Wells opened his folder for comparison. They looked at each of the records and mumbled a few things to each other about the data.

Clyde climbed out of bed and stood facing the two doctors. "This woman says that I am her father, a man named Scotland Royce. Who is she? Why is she here with you?"

Susan continued to cry quietly, as she looked up at the two impeccably dressed doctors. "I told him who he was. He doesn't believe it, and he doesn't remember me at all."

"Mr. Miller," Wells said, "please sit down." Clyde sat and Wells continued, "I have prior medical records for Scotland Royce and I want you to look at them. These records show a perfect match of blood type, teeth from dental records, fingerprints, and X-rays and photographs taken for surgery, between those from Scotland Royce and those from you."

Dr. Wells glanced at all and continued, "From this evidence, we are absolutely certain that you, Clyde Miller, are, in fact, Scotland Royce." He gestured. "And, Susan Richards, over there, IS your daughter."

Clyde was wholly perplexed. He took the stack of records and began shuffling through the pages. They were far too detailed and complex for him. After a few moments, Clyde handed the records back to Wells and said, "So suppose I am this Scotland Royce. Who in the hell--may I ask--is Scotland Royce?"

Dr. Wells was factual and direct in his response. "Mr. Scotland Tyler Royce--we are now going to call you by your real

name. We could tell you all about yourself, who you are, and what you have done. But, it is important to your recovery that we only *help* you recollect your memory--so that you, yourself, know who you are. That is why I asked Dr. Hoffman to see you."

Hoffman was still reviewing the clipboard data. When he finished and looked up, he spoke with a gentle charm. "Hello there, Mr. Royce, I'm Dr. Brent Hoffman." His sparkling eyes fixed on Clyde's. "Mr. Royce--we all feel you have need of my assistance. I promise we will work together--to help you, yourself, remember. Plainly speaking, to let you discover just who in the hell you really are."

Hoffman drew near, scanned Royce's unsightly features, and said, "My, my, Dr. Wells. You have much to do on that face. Tell me, Mr. Royce, do you recall having any other type of accident?"

"I think so," Royce replied, easing back on the bed. "I keep having a horrible nightmare involving an explosion, so powerful it lifts me off the floor. I smash through a doorway and roll down several stair steps. Then there's total blackness, and the nightmare ends."

Hoffman, beaming at this, sat next to Royce. "Well now, that is a good start. Perhaps you did undergo this and suffered a concussion. That could certainly cause memory loss."

Susan was still weeping, as Hoffman walked over and gently squeezed her shoulders with both hands. "We're making progress already," he assured her. "Mr. Royce has what we call retrograde amnesia, an inability to remember events that occurred before the incidence of trauma to his brain. We do not know the full nature of this and need to find out more. Would you agree, Dr. Wells?"

Wells nodded in agreement, as Hoffman continued, "I suggest he be given an MRI brain scan. An MRI scan does not rule out brain injury, since the test is macroscopic, but we need to do so. We can run other tests for microscopic axonal or neuronal brain injury."

"What's an MRI?" Royce asked.

"MRI stands for Magnetic Resonance Imaging. It's really Nuclear Magnetic Resonance, but the word "nuclear" has bad connotations, so the medical people don't include it. Basically, it's a diagnostic tool for revealing internal maladies such as tissue inflammation, tumors, and the like."

"I do agree," Dr. Wells injected. "And if we find something physical, we may well be able to perform surgical repairs. We certainly have access to some of the finest neurosurgeons in the world."

Susan managed a smile and Royce stared at both of them with apprehension.



Hoffman cheerily summarized. "Sounds great! Let's fix that face. You know, sometimes an injury to the brain properly repairs itself. So, before we begin therapy sessions, we must see if Mr. Royce can start to recall events before that trauma occurred.... What do you think, Mr. Royce?"

There was a disturbing silence until Royce softly responded, "I'd like to speak with Dr. Wells alone, if the rest of you don't mind."

"Not at all," said Hoffman affably, and then, reaching for Susan's hand, offered, "Let me treat you to some hot tea in the cafeteria."

Wells looked down at the still-seated Susan, and said, "Now don't fret, Ms. Richards. And, by the way, thank you, but I won't need your limo. There are several matters I must attend to right here for the remainder of the day. I can easily get a ride back to the clinic later. So then--after your tea, why don't you go home?" He reached into his pocket. "Here, take my business card. I promise to keep you well informed as to your father's progress."

As soon as Dr. Hoffman and Susan left, Wells sat down in the chair beside the bed as Royce slumped into it, as if exhausted.

Wells was the first to speak. "Mr. Royce, let me make something very clear to you, and I want to say this with all

sincerity. You may be unaware of this, but I think the world of your friend, George Kelly. Why? Because he has performed thankless miracles with the downtrodden on his West Madison Street beat. Hence, whenever he comes to me, I offer my services, no questions asked. Please make note of this. For Kelly's sake, I would have fixed your face free of charge, as deemed necessary. Such would normally be very expensive, running into thousands of dollars, but I would have found the means to do it all. Frankly, I would have done that simply for Kelly, for all that he has done--because he is my friend, and he wanted to help you."

Wells then began telling Royce a bit more about what he knew of him. "Mr. Royce. One of the most important things we have not told you, my long lost friend, is that you are a very, very wealthy man. When you first came to me as a patient, your net worth was almost a billion dollars. It is probably more now."

Royce lay back and closed his eyes. "Why in the hell would I be out living on the streets like a bum, if I had a billion dollars?"

"That is surely what we need to find out," replied Wells.

Thoughts of Kelly came back to Royce. "By the way, Dr. Wells, have you heard from Kelly?"

"Yes," said Wells. "I talked with him on the phone early this morning. He told me to tell you goodbye and good luck. Said he's glad to be rid of you."

"What?"

"He meant, of course, that you do not need any more of his help. That's Kelly's way. He ended the call by saying, in his words, how he does not like the upper crust, and would never associate with such people. And, obviously, Kelly now knows that you, Mr. Royce, are *one of them*."

Royce was visibly distressed at these comments by Kelly. He genuinely liked him, recalling how Kelly had protected him, although he found it very hard to exhibit it openly. "That's-- that's a real shame."

"I can understand how you feel," said Wells. "Now, what is it you wanted to talk to me about?"

"The surgery--I definitely want you to do it."

"Fine."

"However, if I have all that money you say I have, then I want it done my way."

"Of course."

What followed surprised Wells, as Royce began to describe the treatment he wanted. "First of all, I want to look my age-- about seventy. For example, if you can remove wrinkles you

surely can insert them. My facial skin, before the beating, seemed strangely tight--almost unnatural."

Royce gestured with his hand as he continued, "Months ago, I discovered that my hair was dyed. It's back to gray now and I want to keep it that way. Hell, even give me a receding hairline. Instead of adding, like most want, remove a few follicles. As for my nose, don't just restore it. Change the profile. Make it look normal--but different--much, much different from what it was before."

"I don't understand," Wells said.

"I'm very serious, Dr. Wells. When it's all over, I don't want to be recognized as Scotland Royce."

"And may I ask why?"

"Dr. Wells, I have had strange dreams lately, some terrifying. I have felt from these dreams that someone, some months ago, tried to kill me. I think that the explosion dream is part of that. What's worse is that if what I dreamt was real, I think that someone was killed. In my dream, I saw body parts flying through the air."

Wells became concerned: "If you think that this was real, and you may start remembering it, why don't we just contact the police? Tell Kelly about it."

"No! I must find out myself. I don't know why, but I feel strongly that I must do this! The police can't afford to devote

the resources that a billionaire--like me--has to some obscure investigation of a dream. I can and I will."

Wells relented. "All right, it's your face. But--let's compromise. I'll make you look different all right. And--I'll make you look your age--like an ordinary old man. Not younger. However, I will not add wrinkles or remove follicles or such. How about that?"

"Okay--all right--that's good enough," Royce replied.

"Let's get on with the cutting as soon as possible."

Wells patted him on the shoulder: "Get some rest."

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