

Chapter 2

["How am I? Why am I? Where am I?"]

The Cook County Hospital in Chicago traces its origins back to 1835 when a *Poor House* was established to provide free medical care to indigents. Now, it is a world-renowned academic center, yet still renders medical services to anyone, as well as the poor. The Adult Emergency Room is one of the nation's largest, treating over a hundred thousand patients annually, and is home to the city's busiest trauma center. Because half of the admissions to the Trauma Unit come as a result of assaults, and the majority of those due to gun violence, Cook County Hospital resident staff members have vigorously pursued efforts to reduce violence. Utilizing a task force model led by the

Department of Trauma, the hospital has undertaken several initiatives, including a violence prevention program.

Officer George Kelly served as a police liaison to this trauma task force, so he knew the staff quite well. The force included a number of doctors who provided volunteer service.

Kelly frequently brought to this task force victims and/or culprits from bizarre accidents, muggings, fistfights, gunfights, stabbings, clubbings, abusings, and those, sadly, with an incredible assortment of repulsive diseases. Among the selfless specialists not on staff who frequently volunteered their services was Dr. Wilburn Wells, a renowned Cosmetic Dermatological Surgeon with whom Kelly had formed a friendship.

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Clyde was sitting up, reading a well-worn paperback novel entitled *Cassadaga*, when Kelly entered his ward for a second visit on a frigid November Saturday.

"Hi there, Clyde! You look like shit. But, hey, listen up--I've got some good news for you."

As Kelly pulled a chair to the bed and wrapped himself around it, Clyde closed his book, looked up, and seemed almost pleased to see Kelly. He was certainly curious about any good news. Finger-combing his white hair, he muttered with wire-clenched teeth, "You got it right, Kelly. I look like, and I feel like, shit."

His face still showed bumpy purple blotches and the scars on his nose and lips were thick, scarlet humped, and ugly.

He looked directly at Kelly. "What's the good news? You got me a job in a freak show?"

Kelly kept the conversation light, shooting back, "Yeah! How'd you guess? Of course, you'll also have to put a brass ring through your honker."

Clyde glared at Kelly. "Okay, come on, what is it?"

Kelly quickly became serious. "It's about your messed-up face. I know a really great plastic surgeon who..."

Clyde interrupted: "Kelly, you know I don't have any money. How in the world could I pay for plastic surgery?"

"Listen to me," Kelly replied. "It won't cost you a cent! This doctor I know teaches at Chicago University Medical School. He's got a big Skokie Medical Center up on the north side. Just volunteers down here. He mainly helps reconstruct faces disfigured by guns, knives, beatings, you know. Many are just kids, and he does the work here for nothing. Look, I've already talked to him. He'll be in to see you shortly. His name is Dr. Wilburn Wells."

Clyde was cautious, as he still did not like the idea of being a charity case. He asked with a derisive tone, "I don't know, Kelly. Sounds kind of strange."

Kelly was becoming impatient. *Why the hell am I trying to help this ungrateful bastard*, he thought.

"Look," said Kelly, "he's a good guy, but he also is responsible for some interns down here. Clyde, this is how THEY learn to do what HE does. So--you are going to be used, you know, to show them how to fix a face. Hey, you need the surgery, he needs a patient, for his class. Clyde--don't you forget this--there are lots of people needing that surgery--lots. But--because I asked--he's doing me a favor."

"Why?"

"Because he likes me." He slapped his forehead. "Jesus Christ, that's why!" He sighed. "Clyde, this doc is really good. He could make Quasimodo look like George Clooney."

Kelly rose and moved to the foot of the bed, both hands on the frame. "Look, I just talked to Doc Wells yesterday. At least, for me, be half-way decent to him when he gets here." Trying not to voice his frustration, Kelly added, "Look--he's busy--real busy--but you watch--he'll come by--simply because I asked."

Clyde was surprised, and pleased, but, as usual, could not show it. He just muttered, "Okay, okay, I'll be his guinea pig."

A short time later, a stout, serious looking man of fifty, dressed in white, glasses atop a balding head, entered, and Kelly quickly got up to greet him.

"Doc, how ya doing? Thanks for dropping by."

Dr. Wells smiled and shook Kelly's extended hand, "Good morning Kelly," he said, without looking at or saying anything to Clyde. He then turned and grabbed the medical clipboard hanging at the foot of the bed, and as he read, looked at Clyde for the first time. Suddenly, his normal composure changed. He was obviously getting flustered, a fact not missed by either Kelly or Clyde.

Attempts by Dr. Wells to cover his nervousness failed: "Ah...well now," as he eyed the clipboard, "I take it your--your name is, eh, Clyde, eh, Clyde Miller."

"Yeah, that's what I go by." Then, pointing at his mouth, he said, "Can't talk very well. My jaw all wired up like this."

Dr. Wells gave a courteous smile and sat next to Clyde. He examined Clyde's tattered face very carefully, saying nothing, but obviously disturbed about what he saw in that face. He got up suddenly, walked toward Kelly and whispered, "Kelly, let's go out for a minute. I need to talk to you."

Clyde became flustered. "What's wrong?"

Without responding, Kelly and Wells moved out into the hall.

Clyde could see them talking, but was unable to hear.

Outside in the hallway, Wells spoke first, "Tell me again, Kelly. What do you know about Clyde?"

Kelly scratched the back of his neck and said, "Well, guess I've known Clyde for about four, maybe five months. Remember, I told you yesterday. He's homeless, living out there on West Madison. Don't know why I've been so concerned with taking care of him. There's just something about Clyde--he's different from most of those we see out there."

Wells listened patiently as Kelly continued.

"Doc, isn't he what you call an amnesiac? Seems smart as a whip, but he can't recall his real name, or where he comes from. I've helped him whenever, even found shelter for him, but each time he'd be right back in the streets, soon after I left.... He'd been beaten badly when I found him that night when..."

Wells interrupted, "Kelly. I know who he is. I'm certain of it."

"What? You really think so, Doc, how can..."

"I did cosmetic surgery on this man about a year ago--and not just that once either. I have done surgery on him three different times over the years. I could never forget that face, no matter how lacerated.... I remember thinking that he resembled the actor, Clifton Webb. He also had a shrewd style

and mannerism one could never forget. Nor have I forgotten his name. He is Scottland Royce."

"Royce? Scottland Royce?" Kelly looked surprised. "I know that name. He owns properties on Lake Shore Drive. One of those eccentrics. You hear about his business ventures--very seldom see him."

"Yes," said Wells, "Royce stays out of the limelight. And he surely didn't like getting old. He kept asking me to make him look younger. And get this--he's been missing for about six months."

Kelly knew such headline news had not appeared in the papers. He looked curiously at Wells and asked, "How'd ya know he was missing?"

Wells began explaining very carefully. "It apparently has been kept quiet. I heard about it from his estranged daughter, Susan, a widow. I don't remember her married name. She stopped by a couple of months ago. She knew I had performed surgery on him, and asked about his whereabouts. How would I know, I told her.... Wish I could remember her married name."

"No problem," Kelly said confidently. "I'll run him through the computer records at the police station. We're linked to FBI and most government security files. I can find out all about him, his family, and everything else."

Suddenly, Kelly realized that Clyde was looking at them through the doorway. He grabbed Wells' arm anxiously, saying, "Let's go in and tell old Clyde who he is."

Pulling back, Dr. Wells cautioned, "No, I don't think we should. Not just yet. Telling an amnesiac, suddenly, who they are--could be traumatic."

"Well, okay, you're the doctor," replied a disappointed Kelly.

"How about this, Kelly? Let me go up to my Skokie office and get his medical records. Susan's last name is in it, somewhere. I remember the first time, when he had his crow's feet smoothed and lower eyelids tightened. I was there when she came to visit. He ranted and raved for her to get out and stay away. She tried to console him, but finally left in a fit of anger and despair. I went out, caught up to her and managed to stop the tears. She eventually told me that her mother--Mr. Royce's wife that is--committed suicide. Ever since then, she said, for no specific reason Mr. Royce wanted nothing more to do with her. All of this is on record because, when we finished, I wrote it down, as I was concerned about his mental state after the surgery. He worried me--a wealthy eccentric who was likely bipolar."

"I can understand that," Kelly replied. "He's still a little nutty. Listen--you go do your thing and I'll tell him you had an emergency."

"Good. I don't want to see him now. I'll check with a psychiatrist friend, who'll know the proper procedure. I'm almost certain there must be gradual memory recall, or there could be serious complications."

Dr. Wells walked down the hall as Kelly re-entered.

"What the hell is going on here, Kelly?" Clyde roared as he sat back on the side of the bed.

"Everything's fine. The Doc, he just got an emergency call. Said he'd drop by later."

"Come on, come on, there's more to it than that."

"Clyde! He told me to stay on hold until he gets back."

"Come on, Kelly, spit it out. He knows something I don't."

Kelly paced. "I can't."

"Why, Kelly--why?"

"Ah--oh, the hell with it. All right. A little can't hurt. Clyde--he thinks he knows who you really are. He went to check his medical records. Said you were a patient of his, about a year ago. Now don't you go and tell him I said that."

"I thought it was something like that. It couldn't be at a better time.... Kelly! Kelly, smatterings of my memory are coming back."

"Well I'll be damned."

"Not much, mind you. I've been having some strange, scenic dreams. Like the other night, I dreamt about when I was a youngster. I must have come from a small town, I'll bet. Saw a big courthouse with four clocks around the dome. A library was across the street, with statues of two black lions guarding the entrance. I envisioned myself playing on them. Then, strangely, the dream shifted to caves in a cliff. I crawled inside the big one--there were markings on the wall.... Kelly, see that book I'm reading over there, the author is from Kankakee. That's a rather odd name--Kankakee--but I recalled it from memory."

Kelly appeared apathetic.

"Okay--okay, Kelly--that's enough of my silliness--boring, boring."

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