



The Counsellor

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Chapter One

The restaurant was abnormally busy - even for a Friday evening. Several white-coated servers bustled about the crowded room with trays and dishes, gliding nimbly among the tables, depositing plates of food and retrieving empty glasses. An older-looking waiter with dark black hair and a slim mustache picked his way among the diners to a far corner of the crowded room. He stopped by a table where a young couple was seated, absorbed in a lively conversation.

"Is the dessert to your satisfaction?" he asked.

The young man smiled. "Dominic, you can tell the chef that his sticky toffee pudding is absolutely superb."

"I'm very happy to hear that," the waiter said. "Would you like more champagne?"

"Please."

The waiter refilled their two long-stemmed glasses and stepped back from the table. "Will there be anything else?"

"No, thank you. Everything is simply perfect."

The waiter smiled, bowing slightly. "Thank you, sir. Shall I get your bill?"

"That'll be fine," the man said.

The waiter nodded and moved discretely away from the table.

The diner then turned his attention to the light-haired woman sitting across from him. "To our future together, and to all of the exciting opportunities ahead of us," he said, raising his glass.

"And most of all to you, Mae, my beautiful bride."

"And to the start of our family, Alex," she added, "Not to mention your new promotion,

which has opened a whole new world of possibilities for us."

She smiled and reached across the table, clinking her glass against his, then took a quick sip of champagne before setting it back down.

"Is something the matter?" Alex asked. "You seem a little subdued this evening."

"Are you sure we can afford this?" She asked.

"Don't worry, Mae." He said reassuringly. "We've worked really hard to get where we are today. We can afford to go out once in awhile."

Mae rolled her eyes. "I don't mean the dinner, Alex. I mean, do you really think we can afford to start a family right now?"

"Of course we can," he replied. "I wouldn't deprive you of that privilege no matter how tight our finances might be."

"But our apartment is so small. We only have one bedroom, so if we have company over we won't even have a place for them to sleep."

Alex placed the last forkful of dessert in his mouth, carefully eyeing his wife. "We'll manage somehow," he said with a confident smile.

Mae cleared her throat. "Have you given any more thought to asking my parents to loan us the money for a down payment on a house?"

"You know how I feel about asking other people for money," He said abruptly. "Please don't put me in that position."

"Alright," she said, reaching across the table and taking him gently by the hand. "I won't bring it up again. I promise."

There was an awkward pause as Alex gently dabbed his mouth with a napkin.

"I didn't mean to be so short," he said. "But I've always felt that I am the one who's responsible for providing for our family. It's just the way I was raised."

She gave him a faint smile, "I understand." Her eyes dropped back down to the glass of champagne in front of her.

The waiter slipped up to their table carrying a small round tray with a leather bill pad. "Your check, sir. I hope we will see you again soon."

"You can count on it, Dominic," Alex said, slipping a few bills onto the tray.

"Thank you, sir," the man said. "Have a wonderful evening."

Alex looked back at his wife as the waiter left their table. "Why don't we do a bit of window-shopping before we head back to the apartment?"

She looked up at her husband, smiling broadly. "That sounds like a wonderful idea. It's such a beautiful evening to take a walk."

"This should be fun." He got to his feet and helped Mae out of her chair. "And window-shopping doesn't cost us a penny!" He led the way over to the door of the restaurant, buttoning his coat as they stepped out onto the sidewalk of the busy street.

"Are you warm enough?" he asked. "The wind's a bit chilly."

"Oh, you're a sweetheart," she said, reaching up and kissing him.

"I just want to make sure that my lady is taken care of." He put his arm around her and pulled her closer as they set off down the sidewalk.

The town was charming and picturesque, one of the many reasons why they both loved living there. Slowly they made their way across a small bridge spanning a narrow stream where they approached a collection of quaint-looking shops pressed up against the sidewalk. The

headlights of a approaching car lit up the front of an antique shop they were passing.

"Oh, look, Alex!" she said, pulling him towards the large storefront window. "It's one of those old-fashioned cribs. That would be perfect for the nursery."

He laughed, reaching around and hugging her from behind. "Sure, Mae. Our imaginary nursery for our imaginary four-bedroom house in the suburbs."

"It doesn't hurt to dream now and then, does it?" She smiled back over her shoulder at him, then took him by the hand and led him slowly down the street, pausing briefly in front of each of the shops. They had only gone halfway down the block when the rhythmic sounds of music drifted by them on the evening air.

Mae stopped. "Do you hear that?"

"It sounds like it's coming from Centennial Square by the town hall." Alex replied.

"I wonder what's going on over there," she said, her eyes dancing under the streetlight. "Come on, let's go check it out!"

She led the way, almost pulling Alex down the sidewalk towards the music. "It sounds like a marimba band, Alex. How often do you hear that kind of music in the city?"

A small crowd had gathered in the alcove in front of the town hall. On a raised platform were four musicians: a drummer, guitarist and two xylophone players. Several spectators were on their feet dancing to the soothing sounds of the talented musicians.

Mae pulled her husband towards the small group of dancers. "Come on, Alex, dance with me!" She said enthusiastically.

Alex pulled back from the crowd, smiling awkwardly. "I don't think so, Mae."

"Oh, come on," she said, waving him forward.

Alex shook his head. "No, no, that's okay. You go ahead."

"You don't know what you're missing." She stepped towards the other dancers, keeping to the fringe of the energetic group, moving gently to the rhythm of the music. Every few seconds or so she would wave playfully in her husband's direction, motioning him towards her.

Alex continued to shake his head, yet at the same time admiring his wife's outgoing personality, impressed with her unique style of dancing.

A few minutes later the song came to an end and Mae swayed her way back to her husband, keeping her eyes on him the whole time.

"I think you found your calling, Mae," he said with a grin. "I'm sure the band would love to have you tour with them. You'd do a great job of getting the crowd on their feet."

She laughed. "If the crowd was anything like you, I'd sure have my work cut out for me. You're always missing out on all of the fun!"

"Well," Alex replied, "People with my kind of rhythm should stay on the sidelines."

Mae gave her husband's arm a playful swat, then suddenly looked past him to the lights of a large store across the street.

"Oh look," she said. "The music store's open. Let's go inside!"

Alex groaned softly. "Please, Mae, not again."

She pulled him across the street and into the brightly-lit store. The bell over the door brought the owner of the shop out from the back. He smiled. "Hello again, Mae."

"Hi, Paul. Yes, it's me again." She said with a smile.

The store owner turned to Alex. "Good to see you too, Alex."

Alex smiled. "Our week wouldn't be complete without stopping by to see you."

"Did you want another look at that piccolo, Mae?" Paul asked.

"Just a quick look," she said. "It's not on sale yet, is it?"

"Not officially," Paul said with a grin as he reached beneath the glass-fronted counter and pulling out a beautiful black and silver piccolo in an emerald-coloured box.

She took the piccolo from the store owner and admired it lovingly. "Eight hundred dollars. This is so much better than that old one I have at home, Alex."

"I know, Mae," he said patiently. "And if you continue to save the way you are, you'll be able to come in here and take it home with you before you know it."

She handed the piccolo back to Paul.

"You know," Paul said. "I think I could take another hundred dollars off that price, Mae. Just because you've been such a loyal customer to me all these years."

"Are you serious?" She looked over to her husband. "That means I'm only fifty dollars short," she said with a smile.

Alex let out a long sigh. "All right, Mae. I'll kick in my lunch money for the next week if you promise to help me make sandwiches every morning."

She let out a delighted squeal, clapping her hands together. "Thank you Alex!"

Her husband pulled a debit card from his wallet and handed it to the store owner.

"You're too good to me." She leaned forward and kissed him.

He smiled. "For all the sacrifices you've made for me, you deserve it."

Paul ran the transaction through, then handed the sales slip across to Alex. Finally he passed the emerald-coloured case to Mae.

"I can't thank you enough, Paul," Mae said, her face beaming. "This means a lot to me."

"It's my pleasure, Mae," he replied. "Enjoy!"

Alex put his arm around his wife's shoulders and led her out the front door of the shop.

"Why don't we finish our walk home through the park," he suggested.

"Good idea," she said. "That will give us a chance to . . . "

The sound of screeching tires abruptly cut Mae off in mid-sentence. She looked up at the dark shape of a truck veering off the street directly in front of them, only a few short feet away. At that same moment she felt Alex's hand on her shoulder pushing her away from the oncoming vehicle. For Mae, the next few seconds seemed to pass by in slow motion. Alex's shove launched her across the sidewalk where she landed hard in front of a parked car. She turned to see the truck leap the sidewalk, both front wheels suspended briefly in the air. Then before Alex could react, the vehicle struck him hard on the chest. Alex was driven backwards, his body sailing through the air and crashing violently through the front window of the music store. An instant later the truck smashed head on into the front of the building. Mae screamed and covered her head as a shower of bricks and debris rained down on the street around her.

Still clutching the emerald box tightly in her hand, she staggered back to her feet. The first thing she noticed was the unconscious driver of the truck slumped over the steering wheel. Her eyes then shifted to the demolished remains of the storefront.

"Alex!" she screamed.

Mae raced past the truck and over to the shattered window of the music store and began picking her way through the rubble, her mind still reeling from the shock. Then she saw him . . . just inside the store window, among the broken glass and crushed musical instruments, lay the shattered body of her husband.

Chapter Two

Doctor Job Anderson was sitting at a small table, his hands folded on his lap as he listened intently to the man sitting across from him.

"This is so exciting," the man said. "I haven't had a fiddle to play for a long time!"

"That's great, Phil," Job said with a smile. "Maybe we could have you perform for the other residents when it arrives."

"Oh, I don't know about that, Doc," Phil said, squirming uncomfortably in his seat.

Just then the sound of several voices coming from the hall outside the common area drew Job's attention. He rose to his feet. "I'm sorry, Phil. Could we continue our talk later?"

Phil nodded enthusiastically, rocking back and forth on the hard wooden chair. "No problem, Doc. I'm not going anywhere."

Job crossed the floor of the common area to the hallway by the main entrance. A middle-aged couple and a young woman stood there, deep in conversation.

"I still don't see why I had to come here, Mother," the young woman said, glaring at her parents. "These visits are such a waste of time!"

The older woman undid the buttons on her coat, avoiding her daughter's eyes. "Let's just try to make the best of it while we're here, Sarah."

Job stepped in front of the small group. "Can I help you folks?" he asked.

The older woman turned abruptly in his direction, her dark eyes boring a hole straight through him. "And who might you be?"

"I'm Doctor Job Anderson," he said extending his hand. "I'm one of the primary physicians in this wing, as well as the faculty's neuthetic counsellor."

The woman smiled apologetically at him. "I'm sorry for being short with you, Doctor," she said. "You just never know who you might end up meeting in a place like this. We're the Fultons. I'm Deborah. This is my husband John and that's our daughter, Sarah."

"Pleased to meet you," Job said shaking each of their hands. "Now, is there something I can help you with?"

"We're here to see my crazy sister," the younger woman said with a snort.

Her mother bristled. "Sarah, that's quite enough." She turned to Job. "I'm sorry, Doctor Anderson. We're here to see Mae Little."

"I take it you're Mae's parents," Job said.

"Didn't Mae mention that we were coming?" Mr. Fulton said in surprise.

"Well," Job said awkwardly, "I'm afraid not, but since you're already here, I wouldn't mind discussing a few things with you about your daughter. Would you be willing to sit down with me for a quick chat in the common area? I won't keep you very long."

The three family members shrugged indifferently, then followed Job into the nearly-deserted common room, where he led them over to a table in the far corner. "Please, have a seat and make yourself comfortable," Job said, pulling out one of the chairs for Mrs. Fulton.

"Has my daughter's condition improved?" She asked.

"Well, one of our counsellors retired recently, and I've just been assigned to Mae, so I haven't had much of a chance to get to know her yet, but I was hoping you might be able to provide some information to help me get a better understanding of her background."

"What's there to know?" Mr. Fulton said impatiently. "She was only married for a few short years when she witnessed her husband's tragic death right before her very eyes. I think

that's enough to push anyone over the edge. Especially someone as sensitive as Mae."

Sarah Fulton leaned forward in her chair, frowning. "I would have thought that six months was long enough to get over what happened," she said unsympathetically.

"Young lady, that kind of attitude is exactly what your sister doesn't need," Job said abruptly, "Perhaps one day when you lose someone close to you, you'll realize that the compassion of your family and loved ones goes a long way in the healing process."

There was an awkward silence.

"In order to better help Mae," Job continued, "It's very important that I get to know her. Establishing a trusting relationship with her will be critical to her recovery."

"Well, Mae was always a very polite and obedient child," Mrs. Fulton said, folding her hands neatly on her lap. "We never had a moment's trouble with her."

Her husband cleared his throat noisily. "If you ask me, she spent far too much time alone when she was growing up. She was always content to just sit in her bedroom and play music all day long. She was a rather eccentric child."

The doctor pulled a small notepad from his breast pocket and jotted something down. "That doesn't seem very unusual to me." Job volunteered. "What was her social life like when she was younger? What else did she enjoy doing?"

"She really only enjoyed playing music," Mrs Fulton said. "Her teachers always used to tell us what a talented musician she was."

"Yes," Mr. Fulton agreed, "And we've noticed that since the accident she doesn't go anywhere without the little piccolo that Alex bought her the evening he died. It's almost as if she's regressing into her childhood, and blocking everyone else out in the process."

"Perhaps she's been meditating on happier times," Job said.

"Oh, who knows what that girl is thinking." Mrs. Fulton said with a sigh.

"In circumstances such as Mae's, I've often found that a person's faith can help them get through difficult times," Job suggested. "Does Mae have a religious background?"

Mr. Fulton squirmed uncomfortably in his chair. "I always kept the pew payments up-to-date down at All-Saints when the kids were young."

Sarah scowled. "Even though we only went on Christmas and Easter."

Mrs. Fulton immediately turned towards her daughter, "That's enough, Sarah."

Job got up from his chair. "Well, I appreciate your time folks. That should give me somewhere to start. Why don't I take you down to see your daughter? Perhaps I can speak with you again the next time you visit, I'll probably have more questions for you by then."

The Fultons got to their feet. "Very well, Doctor," Mrs. Fulton said. "We are rather anxious to start the drive home as soon as possible. It's already been a long day."

Job led the way out of the common room and down a wide corridor. "The area that we just left is shared by most of the residents," Job explained. "It's the place where many of our residents love to get away, have a coffee and just relax." He pointed to a large plaque hanging on the wall. "This is a list of all of the generous donations made to our facility," he explained. "As you may already know, private donations are what help to maintain our high standards, and this is one way we show our gratitude to our many generous benefactors.

He stopped partway down the hallway by a large bay window. "Out there in the courtyard you can see the garden that our residents help to maintain. It's quite popular on nice days during the summer. And that office we just passed is where I call home for about fifty hours a week."

"What kind of counsellor did you say you were?" Sarah asked.

"I am a neuthetic counsellor," Job replied. "It's a faith-based counselling practice that is primarily rooted in Biblical principles."

Mr. Fulton raised his eyebrow, turning awkwardly in Job's direction. "I hope that all the money we're paying for Mae's recovery isn't just going towards Sunday School lessons."

"The principles regarding mental health found in the Bible are a lot more beneficial to the soul than mere Sunday School lessons, Mr. Fulton," Job said with a wry smile. "That's something I thought for sure they would have taught over at *All-Saints*."

"Well, I suppose so . . ." he said doubtfully.

"Besides," Job said. "There are many different approaches to counselling in this facility other than my own. As a matter of fact, many of our physicians hold counselling degrees."

He noticed Mrs. Fulton shoot a quick glance at her husband.

At that moment a well-dressed man stepped out from the room they were passing. He appeared to be in his mid-sixties, thin, with short fair hair. He stopped in front of the Fultons and smiled broadly. "Good afternoon," he said in a broad British accent. He reached out his hand to Mr. Fulton. "Just here for a quick visit, then?"

"Yes," Mr. Fulton said. "We're here to see our daughter."

Mrs. Fulton stepped forward, extending her hand, a large smile creasing her face. "Judging from your accent I would guess that you are from the Manchester area of the old country. My mother was from there. I'd recognize the accent anywhere."

"I'm afraid I'm not from Manchester, Ma'am," the man said, looking a bit puzzled. "However it's a common mistake. As a matter of fact I was born and raised in Sydney."

The Fultons looked at each other in confusion.

"Sydney, Australia?" Mr. Fulton asked.

"No," the man said abruptly. "Sydney, Nova Scotia. My ancestors were runaway slaves from Louisiana. They fled to Sydney via the *Underground Railway*."

There was an awkward silence.

"Your ancestors were African-American?" Mrs. Fulton replied doubtfully.

"No," the man said, looking a bit startled. "Whatever gave you that idea?"

Mrs. Fulton looked over at Job who was grinning from ear-to-ear. She then looked back at the man in front of them. "You're not a doctor, are you?" she finally asked.

The man raised himself to his full height, his chest protruding, his chin thrust out towards them. "My dear, I'll have you know that medicine runs through my very blood!"

Job laughed loudly. "I'll say it does. How many meds are you on now, William?"

"I'm up to seven now."

Job gave him a puzzled expression. "Did you say seven? That doesn't sound right. I'd better look into that this afternoon."

William threw his head back. "Nonsense, my boy. I've never felt better." With that he edged his way past Job and the Fultons and hurried off down the hallway.

"Well," Job said. "Shall we continue?"

"Please," Mrs. Fulton said shaking her head. "And no more unscheduled stops."

"I'll do my best," Job said with a smile, leading them down the corridor to Mae's room.

Chapter Three

As Job and the Fultons approached Mae's room they could hear the faint sound of a flute playing in the background. Quietly Job led the way into the room. Mae was sitting in a chair with her back to the door. Perched on the edge of a recliner directly across from her was a woman of about 50 years, with messy grey hair and large dark eyes. As Job and the Fultons entered the room the older woman seemed to fade back into the plush armchair, eyeing them nervously. As the last of the visitors entered the room, Mae's playing stopped and she turned to face them.

"That was beautiful, darling," her mother said.

There was an awkward pause as Mae quickly placed her piccolo back into an emerald-coloured case, blushing slightly. Job beckoned to the older woman sitting near Mae. "Karen, why don't we give Mae some time alone with her family?"

Karen got to her feet and shuffled across the small room towards Job. As she reached the doorway, she paused for a moment and looked back towards Mae. "Will you still be coming to Andy's farewell party, Mae?" She asked in a quiet, monotone voice.

Mae nodded, her gaze fixed on the emerald-coloured case in her hands.

Job took Karen by the arm and led her through the doorway. "Let me know if you folks need anything else," he said over his shoulder. "I'll be right down the hall in my office." With that he exited the room, pulling the door closed behind him.

Mr. Fulton crossed the room to where his daughter was sitting. He bent down awkwardly and gave Mae a hug. "It's wonderful to see you, Sweetheart," he said.

Mrs. Fulton sat down on the bed beside her daughter. As she pulled a handkerchief from

her purse her daughter seemed to stiffen beside her. "How are you, Mae?" she asked. "Have the counselling sessions with Doctor Anderson been helpful?"

"I guess so," Mae replied. "But I haven't had that many sessions with Doctor Anderson. He just took over from Doctor Bergman a couple of weeks ago."

"What about visitors, Mae?" her father asked.

"Other than your own monthly visits?" Mae replied.

"We actually have our own lives, Mae," Sarah said. "The whole world doesn't revolve around you and your problems, you know."

Mrs. Fulton turned angrily towards her younger daughter. "If you can't mind your manners, Sarah, then you can wait outside until we're finished."

Sarah lowered her head, turning away from the others.

"That's okay, Mom" Mae said. "I don't blame Sarah for being frustrated with me."

"I don't need you to stick up for me, Mae."

"That's enough, Sarah," her father said. "Go wait out in the hallway!"

Sarah turned on her heels and slipped out into the hall, closing the door firmly behind her. She exhaled loudly, then quickly crossed the corridor and sat down hard on a wooden bench. After a brief moment the sound of approaching footsteps caused her to look up. Doctor Anderson was standing in front of her, his arms crossed.

"Is something the matter, Sarah?" he asked.

"No," Sarah said. "Everything's just fine."

Job sat down on the bench beside her. "It doesn't sound like everything's fine. We could all hear Mae's door slamming from the other end of the hallway."

Sarah sighed. "I'm just tired of hearing my sister feeling sorry for herself."

Job leaned back in his seat, seeming to gather his thoughts. "Maybe I can try to help you understand where Mae's coming from," he said. "That is if you're willing to listen."

"What's there to explain?" Sarah replied. "She's just being selfish. Before all of this happened, Mae always had time for me . . . she was always there to help me with my school work or to just talk. Now it's like she's cutting everybody out of her life. I realize that she lost her husband, but how long is it going to take for her to get back to normal?"

"Well, Sarah, you've got to understand that she may never get back to normal, as you remember it. Mae's life has been changed dramatically and it often takes a while for someone to recover from what your sister's gone through. In fact there are many people who never make a full recovery, even though they might seem to have it all together on the outside."

Sarah looked up at Job. "It's not that I don't care about Mae . . . because I really do. She was my best friend, but now it's like she doesn't even care about me at all."

"I understand that you may feel abandoned by your sister, Sarah." Job replied sympathetically. "I'm sure that she misses you just as much."

"Ever since she started dating Alex," Sarah continued. "It seemed like she didn't have time for me anymore, like Alex was the only person in the world."

Job smiled. "When you meet the right person someday I think you'll want to spend a lot of time with him too," he said. "It's not that she was trying to exclude you from her life, but rather that she had been swept up in a new and exciting relationship. Although it can be difficult, being patient with someone we care about is what love is all about. Mae will never stop needing the support of her family, especially since she lost someone so close to her. Don't you think it's

selfish for *you* not to be there for Mae when she needs you the most?"

Sarah paused, looking down at the floor. "But it's been so long, Doctor Anderson. I just wish she'd get over this already so I can have my old sister back."

Job nodded understandingly. "I realize how hard it must be for you, Sarah." He reached into his pocket and pulled out a small object, then handed it to Sarah. "Here, let me give you something. Do you have a computer that you can use at home?"

"Of course," Sarah said, taking the item from Job.

"There are several videos on that thumb-drive that I sometimes watch with my patients. I think it might help you to understand what Mae's been going through. It might also help you to provide some of the support that she's going to need in order to begin the healing process."

Sarah glanced down at the object in her hand. "Do you always carry these things around with you?" she asked with a smile.

Job laughed. "You never know when they might come in handy."

"I take it these videos are religious in nature?"

"Some of them. A person's faith has a lot to do with understanding the suffering of others, and how we can respond in a way that will help us to better understand how they are feeling,"

Job replied. "That being said, life's circumstances can sometimes break a person, and I hope these videos will help show you exactly why Mae needs your support now, more than ever."

At that moment the door to Mae's room opened and Sarah's parents led Mae out into the corridor. Mrs. Fulton's arm was wrapped tightly around her daughter. "We're taking Mae to the farewell party for one of her friends out in the garden, Sarah. You're welcome to join us."

Sarah slowly got to her feet. "Thanks, Doctor Anderson."

“It was my pleasure.” Job replied.

He had no sooner gotten the words out of his mouth than the piercing shriek of a train whistle sounded from a nearby room as one of the residents, William James appeared before them, a large wooden whistle clutched firmly in his hand. "All aboard!" he shouted. "It's time for Andy's farewell party, so let's all make our way outside." He began ushering them away from Mae's room and down the hallway. “Come on folks, let's get moving.”

The Fultons hesitated, looking over at Job for direction.

Job smiled. "I'll see you all at the party in a few minutes," he said with a wave. "The gathering is just through those double doors and to your left. " He turned to William as the Fultons made their way down the hallway. "William, could I see you for a minute before you join the others outside? I just have a few questions to ask you."

"Sure, Doc," William said, his head bobbing energetically.

"William, do you remember earlier when you mentioned the new medications you're taking? I was just wondering why you were prescribed the additional meds.”

William gave his head a thoughtful scratch. "Well, I don't really think Doctor Moore explained why – he just said they might help me feel better.”

"Haven't you been feeling well?" Job asked.

"Well, I think so," William said. "Personally I think Doctor Moore is just trying to control my mind.” His eyes suddenly lit up. “But I won't let him.” He grinned devilishly.

Job nodded, jotting down another quick note in his pad. "And how long did he say you were to be on these new medications?"

"I'm not sure. He didn't say."

"Okay, William. Just let me know if you notice any changes in the way you feel."

"Sure, Doc." He gave Job a nod, then hurried past him down the corridor.

Job folded up the notepad and stuck it back in his pocket, then started down the hallway towards the nurses' station.

A heavy-set, dark-haired woman was seated behind the counter, engrossed in an open file in front of her. She didn't hear Job approach until the last moment when he leaned over her desk and cleared his throat loudly. The nurse jumped, dropping the file onto the floor. "Oh, my goodness, Doctor Anderson. You scared the daylights out of me."

Job laughed. "I'm sorry, Margaret, I just couldn't resist."

She scooped the file folder off the floor and smiled up at Job. "Did you just come by to give me a heart attack, or can I actually help you with something?"

"As a matter of fact I was hoping to take a look at the med logs for each of the residents. Do you think you could drop them off in my office first thing in the morning? That way I'll have a chance to go through them in detail before our morning staff meeting."

"Certainly, Doctor Anderson. I'll have someone from records send them over to your office - that is unless something unexpected happens to me before then - like a sudden heart attack." She smiled, giving Job a broad wink.

Job laughed and turned back down the hallway. "I appreciate that, Margaret."

He was just about to leave the common area when he spotted another resident, Mel Chilocolwich, sitting in a corner by himself, watching television. He turned and crossed the room to where the older man was seated. "Are you coming to Andy's party, Mel?"

Mel slowly turned his gaze towards the doctor, eyeing him curiously. "Why would I do

that?" he asked bluntly. "I hardly knew this Andy guy you're talking about."

Job grinned. "We should all try to show our support, Mel. Andy's been through a lot."

"And you think that I haven't been through a lot?" Mel shouted, raising his arms in the air. "I had to flee my own country . . . my entire family was killed right before my very eyes when I was only a young boy! Why do you think I ended up in a place like this?"

"I know you've been through a lot too, Mel," Job said reassuringly. "But we all need a little encouragement and support to help keep us going."

Mel shook his head angrily and then turned back to the television program he had been watching. "Just leave me alone!"

"Alright, Mel." Job said. "If you change your mind, you know where to find us."

Job turned once again and walked down the hallway through the double glass doors leading out into the courtyard. Across the yard from him a small crowd of people were clustered about a long, food-covered table, and in the shade of a gazebo a small brass band was pounding out a raucous tune to the enthusiastic appreciation of the audience.

Job stood on the fringes of the crowd, enjoying the excitement as he helped himself to a tuna sandwich. He was surprised to see Mae and her family mixing with many of the people who had already gathered outside. As the tune came to an end, the activity director stepped between the band and the crowd and held up his hand for silence.

"Thank you all for coming here to help bid our friend, Andy, a fond farewell."

The crowd applauded politely, many of them turning in Andy's direction.

"Way to go, Andy!" William shouted as the crowd quieted.

The activity director smiled supportively at Andy. "We have all gathered here to wish our

good friend, Andy, all the best in his new life . . ."

"You did it, Andy!" William interrupted. "The rest of us are still stuck here behind these prison walls, but you finally made it out of this wretched place!"

The activity director cleared his throat, glancing in William's direction. "Thank you, William," he said. "I think it's safe to say that most of you would rather be at home with your families right now, and hopefully, like Andy, many of you soon will be."

For some reason, the ominous words of the activity director made Job turn in the direction of the Fultons. It was then that he noticed Mae's head bowed down and leaning on her mother's shoulder. Even from his position across the lawn, Job could see that she was crying.

He glanced back to the activity director, their eyes meeting. The director's shoulders slouched forward and he gave his head a frustrated shake. He then cleared his throat nervously. "Maybe now's a good time to get on with the rest of the party. Let's all sit back, relax and enjoy some more music from our special guests - take it away, boys."

Job drew in a deep breath as the music started back up. He watched as Mr. Fulton reached his arm around Mae's shoulders and drew her gently through the crowd and back towards the building. Job watched the Fultons until they disappeared inside the building through the double glass doors, then picked up a drink from a nearby table. There wasn't much left for him to do now, but head over and say his final good-byes to his friend Andy.

Chapter Four

Job pushed open the doors to the front entrance and made his way down the hallway towards the nurses' station. Margaret was already at her desk speaking to Karen, who was still dressed in her tattered blue bathrobe.

"Good morning, ladies," Job said. "Did you enjoy the party yesterday, Karen?"

Karen squirmed awkwardly. "Yes, Doctor," she mumbled.

"I'm glad to hear that," Job said with a smile. "Try not to forget about our appointment later this morning."

"I won't," Karen replied. "Nine o'clock sharp. I won't forget."

"That's right, Karen." Job said, checking his notes. "You're very good at remembering our appointments. Half the time I can't even remember my own name."

Karen laughed softly, then shuffled off down the hallway towards her room.

Job turned to Margaret. "Did you remember the files I mentioned yesterday?"

"They're already on your desk, Doctor. You should still have a chance to go through them before your morning meeting."

"Great. Thanks, Margaret. I'll try to get them back to you later today."

Job made his way down the corridor to his office, closing the door firmly behind him. He placed his briefcase next to the sofa, hung up his jacket, and settled into the plush leather chair behind his desk. He then picked up the first of the file folders and slowly began thumbing his way through the pages, muttering absently to himself.

"William . . . William James . . ." Job leaned back in his chair. "William was right. He's

now on seven different medications."

Suddenly there was a loud knock on his office door. Job closed the folder, pausing momentarily before responding. "Come in."

The door slowly opened and Mae stepped sheepishly into the room. "Are you busy, Doctor Anderson?"

"Of course not, Mae. Please, come in and have a seat."

"It's nothing serious," she said, remaining by the door. "I was just wondering if I could talk to you about something a little later on today."

"Sure, Mae. How would you feel about moving up your appointment?"

"That would be great," she said.

"Then it's settled." Job flipped through the agenda on his desk. "Why don't we make it later this morning - say around ten-thirty?"

Mae nodded, taking a half-step back into the hall. "Alright. I'll see you then."

When the door closed behind her Job sat for a moment or two in silence. The fact that Mae was anxious to meet with him came as a bit of a surprise, although perhaps it was fitting, especially considering the visit she had with her family the day before.

He pulled out his notebook, jotted down a few thoughts, then dropped William's file into his briefcase and headed out the door to his staff meeting.

When he arrived at the Board Room three of his colleagues were already seated around the large conference table. The Chief Physician, Doctor John Moore, had already taken his position at the table's head. Moore was an older man of about sixty with a short grey beard and receding hairline. He was wearing a stylish three-piece suit.

"Good morning, Job," Doctor Moore welcomed.

"Morning." Job said, taking a seat beside Edwin Burrows and across from Roger Gardner. He turned to the smiling face beside him. "How's your morning, Ed?"

"Not bad." Ed replied non-committedly. "How was Andy's party?"

"Oh I think it went over rather well," Job said. "I'm going to miss having Andy around, but I'm glad that he's finally ready to move on."

"Thanks to all your hard work," Ed said. "I still can't believe the kind of turnaround Andy made since you started working with him."

Job grinned self-consciously. "I think the grace of God had a lot more to do with Andy's recovery than I did, but I appreciate the compliment."

"Well, I'm glad your God is on our side," Ed replied.

At that moment Doctor Moore tapped his gavel lightly on the desk. "All right, everyone. Let's get this meeting started."

Job and Ed turned their attention to the chairman.

"Why don't we begin by giving a brief outline of any progress or changes that our residents have made during this past week," Doctor Moore suggested. "Doctor Burrows, why don't you give us an update on the residents in your care?"

Ed shifted in his seat as he opened the file folder in front of him. "Karen Moir," he began. "Karen continues to isolate herself from many of the other residents but has shown some improvement in her cognitive memory functions. From all outward appearances she remains disheveled and poorly groomed. She often remains dressed in her bathrobe each morning until one of the members of staff notices and helps her get dressed."

There was a pause, then the chairman, John Moore, spoke up. "Aside from the obvious fact that she tends to isolate herself from the other residents in social situations, has anyone else noticed any changes or improvement in her overall mental health?"

Ed leaned forward. "I have been finding that she is now able to sustain a conversation for much longer than when she first arrived."

"That's right," Job agreed. "That has been very encouraging. She practically used to run away whenever I approached her. Now she seems to be developing more trust."

"Maybe she's gotten to know you," Roger said. "Have you noticed any improvement with the people she doesn't come into contact with on a regular basis?"

"Well," Job said hesitantly. "I did notice at Andy's party that she was speaking with one or two of the guests without getting noticeably uncomfortable."

"That's better than I usually do at parties," Ed said with a laugh.

There was another brief pause while John Moore made some notes on his laptop. After a moment he looked up and turned slowly towards Roger. "Doctor Gardner," he said. "Why don't you bring us up to speed on Mel Chilocolwich?"

Roger Gardner was rail-thin, with a pale, almost transparent complexion. His hair was dark and his bushy eyebrows almost managed to hide a pair of deceptively warm eyes. Despite these characteristics, Doctor Gardner was all business. He snapped open a handmade leather dossier and removed a yellow legal pad from inside.

"Mel Chilocolwich," he began. "This resident continues to display textbook signs of post-traumatic stress disorder. As we all know, this appears to be a direct result of the many years of persecution he suffered in eastern Russia where he and his family were prisoners for nearly two

decades. Since his condition appears to show signs of further deterioration, I have prescribed additional medications to help even out his behaviour."

"What additional medications have you prescribed?" Ed asked.

Roger consulted his notes. "*Zipphonex* and *Typhonel*."

Job leaned forward, his eyes meeting Doctor Moore's. "I've been meaning to ask you about these medications, sir," he said. "I noticed that William has also been prescribed those same two drugs during the past week - on top of the five meds he's already taking."

Roger scowled in Job's direction. "Why does that come as a surprise, Doctor Anderson?" he asked. "This is a mental hospital, not Sunnybrook Farm."

Doctor Moore chuckled.

"I'm well aware of that," Job replied, "But I think any time a resident is placed on that many different anti-psychotropic drugs, certain concerns should be raised."

"I couldn't agree more," Ed Burrows said. "I think it goes without saying that there are often dangerous side-effects associated with these kinds of drugs. That being said I don't think it's unusual for Doctor Anderson to express such concerns."

Doctor Moore cleared his throat officiously. "Now, gentlemen. We are all concerned professionals around this table who clearly want the very best for each resident, but we also know that not everyone can be made well by intensive therapy and counselling. Sometimes medications can be extremely beneficial for individuals with behavioral problems.

"Regardless of what we all think," Doctor Moore continued, "I really do have to give you a lot of credit, Doctor Anderson, for the counselling you have done with Andy during these past few weeks. His recovery was nothing short of miraculous."

"Thank you, Doctor," Job said.

"You're welcome," Doctor Moore said with a tight-lipped smile. He took another glance down at his notes before continuing. "Doctor. Anderson, why don't you bring us up to speed on a few of the other residents, especially any concerns you may have."

"Alright," Job agreed. "Over the past few weeks I've had the chance to get to know some of our residents rather well, although I am still too new to give much insight at this point. However, one resident in particular has caught my attention. William James. William appears to have a much more positive outlook than many of our other residents, but I have noticed that his behaviour has become more unusual during these last few days. As I mentioned earlier, William's chart indicates that he has also been prescribed two new anti-psychotropic drugs, so I would like to reiterate my concerns that some of the residents might need to be re-evaluated in this regard."

"Thank you, Doctor Anderson," Doctor Moore said. "Your concerns have been duly noted in the minutes. Are there any other issues you would like to raise?"

"As you all know, my specialty is grief counselling, and Mae Little is one of the residents that I would like to focus more of my attention on in the coming weeks. I have not yet had a chance to familiarize myself with much of her history, so if someone is able to give me a little more information on her current condition, I would appreciate it."

"Doctor Gardner has had the most experience dealing with her," Doctor Moore said. "So perhaps he can give us a bit more insight on any progress that she's made."

"I'll do my best," Roger said, folding his hands on his chest. "I'm sure it doesn't come as a surprise to hear that Mae is a very broken woman, but I believe that time will be our most important ally in seeing her make a full recovery. She has suffered a great loss and is going

through a prolonged grieving period. As a result of her sensitive nature, this period seems to be lasting a lot longer than we've seen with residents who have suffered a similar loss."

"Do you feel confident that she might benefit from some of the faith-based counselling methods that I have to offer?" Job asked.

"Well," Roger said with a shrug, "If you feel that your particular methods would be beneficial to her recovery, then by all means feel free to share the good news."

Doctor Moore cleared his throat and gave Roger a quick warning glance. "I think that would be fine, Job. Just be sure to keep us up to date on how your sessions are progressing."

Job nodded. "I'll be sure to bring you up to speed at our next meetings."

"Are there any further questions or concerns that we should be discussing this morning?"

Doctor Moore asked as he gently lowered the screen of his laptop.

Ed leaned forward. "Aside from the usual complaints about the meals, everything is pretty much status quo with the other residents."

Job grinned. "I was thinking about having a few words with the chef myself."

Doctor Moore laughed. "Well if that's everything, gentlemen, why don't we adjourn our meeting until tomorrow?"

Job scooped up the file from the table. As he was getting to his feet he could see that Ed was waiting for him by the meeting room door. Ed ushered Job silently down the hallway, eyeing him curiously. "What's on your mind, Ed?" Job asked.

Ed gave him a sheepish grin. "You know you always have my full support, Job, but you might not want to rock the boat too much regarding the new medications. You've only been here a short time and guys like John and Roger have their own ways of doing things."

Job smiled. "You know that I've always respected your opinion, Ed, but when they hired me to work at this facility, Doctor Moore and the others knew that my particular methods might not exactly be what they're familiar with. However, I've always achieved good results in the past, and they know this. If that means rocking the boat a little along the way, then so be it."

Ed shrugged good-naturedly. "Okay, Job, if you feel that strongly about it, I understand. I just wanted to share my concerns, from one friend to another."

"I appreciate that, Ed. Do you have time for a quick coffee before rounds?"

"As long as you're paying," Ed said with a smile.

Chapter Five

Job opened the door to his office and ushered Karen into the corridor. "Thank you, Karen, I really found our sessions to be most productive. I appreciate you sharing your thoughts about your family. I'll be sure to remember your niece and nephew in my prayers."

"Thank you, Doctor," Karen replied.

"You're welcome, and don't forget our meeting on Thursday."

As Karen shuffled off towards her room, Job took in a deep breath and made his way down the hallway towards the nurses' station. Margaret was sitting there speaking with a young woman dressed in a pair of bright blue scrubs.

Margaret smiled as she saw Job approaching. "Could I speak with you for a minute, Doctor Anderson?" She nodded to the young woman she had been speaking with. "I'd like you to meet Julie. She's a student nurse from the local university who's been placed with us for the next few weeks as a part of her placement program."

Job shook Julie's outstretched hand. "I think I've seen you around here before, but I never had the chance to say 'hello'."

"It's nice to meet you, Doctor Anderson," Julie said.

"Are you enjoying your time with us?" Job asked.

"Actually, I'm still kind of nervous," she said timidly. "I've only been here for a few shifts and I've already been physically and verbally abused more than a dozen times."

Margaret laughed. "Oh, honey, you'll get used to all the characters around here in no time at all, as impossible as that might seem right now."

"Most of the residents are quite harmless," Job said reassuringly. "They just have a few eccentricities that make them each unique. Although it's still a good idea to keep your guard up."

"That's what's called *putting a positive spin on things*," Margaret said.

"For example, let's take a look at Frank," Job said, pointing towards a man watching television in the common area. "He looks like your average, mild-mannered man. His favourite hobbies include watching television and going out for long walks. You never would have guessed that he murdered his entire family and buried them all under the floorboards of his house."

Julie looked up into the dead-panned expression of the doctor, her eyes wide. "He didn't really kill his family," she said hesitating slightly. "Did he?"

"I guess you'll find out sooner or later," Job said with a smile.

Margaret laughed. "If there's one thing you've got to learn around here, Julie, it's the fact that you can't believe one word these young doctors tell you. Especially this one!" She smiled reassuringly at Julie as she let out a sigh of relief.

Margaret turned back towards Job. "No, we don't have any murderers living with us." She paused. "Well, at least not any murderers that were ever convicted."

Job gave her a big grin, tapped the side of his nose and then made his way back down the hallway, smiling all the way.

He was about to enter his office, when he noticed that the door to Mae's room was opened slightly. Poking his head inside he saw Mae sitting in a chair by the window, quietly reading a small paperback novel. "Good morning, Mae."

Mae looked up and smiled.

"I know I'm a bit early," Job said, "But I was wondering if you'd like to get a head start on

our session this morning? That is if you're ready."

"Sure." Mae agreed, getting slowing to her feet.

"It's such a beautiful day." Job said cheerfully. "Why don't we meet in the solarium for our session this morning? But you might need to take a jacket for the walk."

"Alright," Mae Agreed. "That sounds nice."

Mae retrieved her jacket from the closet and pulled it over her shoulders. She then followed Job out of her room and through the large glass doors leading into the garden area. It was the perfect fall morning. The air was crisp and the September sun was doing its best to melt the chill and fend-off the cool winds of early winter.

"It's a beautiful day, isn't it Mae?" Job said.

She nodded, pulling her thin jacket more tightly around her shoulders.

"I gather you're not used to this kind of weather," Job remarked.

"No," she answered. "Our family lives south of here on the island. For some reason the climate is much milder there, even though it's only a few hours away."

"I know what you mean," Job responded. "I spent a few summers down there. I guess we're not nestled into the mountains as much as you are down south."

Job brought them to a stop in front of a large stone fountain located in the middle of the garden. The massive fountain towered high above them, with fixtures layered one on top of the other and a small figurine gracing the top. Both Job and Mae watched mesmerized as the water tumbled from the top, down the sides and into a shallow pool at the bottom. Job looked over at Mae and saw that she was smiling, a wide peaceful smile which covered her face from ear to ear.

"It's almost magical, isn't it?" Job said.

“It is,” Mae agreed. “There's something about the sound of running water that always has a way of clearing my mind. It's sounds so peaceful.”

Job smiled. "Did your family have a fountain like this in your garden back home?"

"No, but my parents always took us on a lot of vacations to resorts that were near the ocean," she paused for a moment, still staring up at the falling water. “Ever since then I've always enjoyed listening to the sound of running water.”

Job pulled out his notepad and scribbled something in it. He then reached out, taking Mae by the arm. "Why don't we continue our conversation inside the solarium?"

She smiled back at him. "It's nice to get some fresh air.”

“If you'd like, we can have all of our sessions out here from now on.”

"I guess that would be okay," she said.

He smiled. "Alright. I'll make a note of that for next time." With that he led her the rest of the way across the yard to the solarium, which was located in the far corner of the garden. He opened the door, and ushered her into a cozy room dominated by a large stone fireplace. Several plush armchairs and sofas were scattered about the room.

"Can I take your jacket?" Job asked.

“No, that's okay,” Mae said, wrapping her arms tightly around herself.

"Why don't I drag a couple of those big chairs over to the fireplace?" Job suggested, quickly pulling a couple of large suede chairs across the room. "Just give me a minute to get the fire going. I think this one runs on gas, so I just need to find the ignition switch."

Mae nodded, taking her seat in a large overstuffed chair. Job walked over to the side of the fireplace and turned the small *on* switch, waiting anxiously for the gas to catch light. When

nothing happened he turned it *off* and *on* several more times until there was a loud "whoosh" and bright orange flames leaped up from the fake logs.

Mae let out a startled cry and shrank back into her chair.

"It's okay, Mae," Job said reassuringly. "It's just the gas. Sometimes it's hard to get it started. In a minute we'll have a nice fire to keep us warm."

"I'm sorry." Mae said sheepishly.

"There's no need to apologize," Job reassured her. "We all get a little jumpy sometimes. You don't have to feel embarrassed around me."

Job retreated to a large green chair across from Mae and dropped into it, his clipboard resting gently on his lap. "Well, Mae," he said. "Now that we have this time to get to know each other a little better, what can you tell me about yourself?"

Mae's eyes were fixed on the fire, mesmerized as she watched the flames dancing over the small pile of artificial wood. When it had become obvious to Job that she wasn't responding he leaned forward, attempting to regain her attention.

"Mae, is there anything on your mind that you'd like to talk about today?"

She finally turned to face Job, still averting his gaze. "Andy moved into this facility only a few months before I did, but now Andy's gone and I still don't feel well enough to leave. I was hoping you could help me in the same way that you helped Andy."

Job cleared his throat. "Well, I'll be glad to help you in any way I can, Mae. Was there anything specific that you wanted to discuss with me?"

"Well," Mae said hesitantly, "I know that you spoke with Andy a lot about how a person's faith can often help them overcome personal problems."

Job edged forward in his chair, carefully eyeing the woman seated before him. "I'd be glad to discuss those things with you, Mae. Do you have faith in a higher power?"

Mae hesitated for a moment, seeming to collect her thoughts. "Well, I always thought that I did, but I have trouble understanding why God would want to take my husband away from me. I realize that God works in mysterious ways, but I just can't wrap my mind around what happened. Alex and I were just starting our lives together, and for some reason God decided to take him away from me before I even had a chance to really get to know him."

Job paused for a moment, seeming to search for the right words to say. "That's certainly one of the most important questions in life, and also one of the most difficult to answer. First of all, I'd like to start by telling you how sorry I am that you lost your husband, Mae, and I promise you that no matter how long it takes we'll work together to sort through all of the feelings and questions that you're struggling with." Again he paused briefly, carefully studying Mae's expression before continuing. "I'm not sure if this is the answer you're looking for, Mae, but God can often use the tragedies we face in our lives in order to draw us closer to Him."

Mae looked down at the ground, her face expressionless. "How am I supposed to believe that God cares for me when he takes away the most important person in my life?"

"I know how difficult it can be to lose someone close to you," Job said. "I went through a similar experience myself, which caused me a great deal of pain and confusion." Job cleared his throat and turned his clipboard face-down on his lap. "About twenty years ago, when I was just finishing my first year in college, my only sister was diagnosed with leukemia. I remember begging God for Kate's recovery, but after only six short months she passed away. I realize that it's not the same thing as losing your husband, but it was something that really rocked our family

to its very foundation. It's the main reason why I decided to go into counselling."

"Weren't you angry at God for taking your sister away from you?" Mae asked.

"Of course," Job said. "I believe that anger is one of the primary emotions that a person feels when they're going through the loss of a loved one. It took me a long time to understand why God would allow such a tragedy to happen to our family, but I eventually came to realize that despite all of my pain and anger, God was still with our little family, helping us through our struggles, and as a result we were drawn closer to Him and to each other."

Mae continued to stare down at the floor, her mouth set in a thin, hard line. "I just don't see how I can I ever believe that God really cares about me," she said.

Job leaned in towards her. "I understand how difficult it can be when you feel abandoned. Perhaps that's something we can work through during our time together, Mae."

Chapter Six

Job leaned over his desk and thumbed through a small Rolodex. After a moment he slipped a card from its place, studied it carefully, then dialed the number.

Three rings later the business-like voice of a receptionist was heard on the other end of the line. "Ellis Pharmaceuticals. Anne speaking. How may I direct your call?"

"Hello, Anne. This is Doctor Job Anderson from *Emmanuel Psychiatric Hospital*. Could you please direct me to your Sales and Marketing Department?"

"Certainly, Doctor. One moment, please." There was a brief pause followed by a sudden click, at which point Job heard a man's voice on the other end of the line.

"Marketing. Tom here."

"Hello Tom. This is Doctor Job Anderson from *Emmanuel Psychiatric Hospital*."

"Hello, Doctor. What can I do for you?"

"I just had a couple of questions to ask you about a few of the drugs manufactured by your company which have been prescribed to a number of our residents."

"What would you like to know?" Tom asked.

"Normally we get all of our medications from a local pharmacy, but I've noticed that a few recent acquisitions have come directly from your firm. I was wondering who our facility's contact might be regarding the ordering of medications."

Job could hear the clatter of a keyboard before Tom responded. "Let's see here," Tom said absently, "My computer is telling me that your chief physician, Doctor John Moore, is the primary contact for all medication orders placed by your facility."

"I've noticed that we have recently received large amounts of the drugs *Ziphonex* and *Typhonel*," Job said. "And I was wondering if you could tell me whether we have a history of ordering medications that are relatively new to the market."

"Well," Tom continued. "It's not unusual for a facility such as yours to order quantities of this size, and no matter how recent a medication may have been placed on the market, you can rest assured knowing that our company only sells the highest quality pharmaceuticals."

"I understand," Job conceded. "I'm simply concerned about the fact that we are ordering such a large quantity of medication that still appears to be in the experimental phase. This begs the question, has your company even determined what all of the drug's side-effects might be - especially when combined with other anti-psychotropic medications? I noticed that your company included very little information with the packaging."

"I understand your concerns, Doctor Anderson. You clearly have a lot of questions regarding our products, but I think they would best be answered by our research and development team rather than sales and marketing. I think it's safe to say that I have the same information as you in this regard, and unfortunately the technicians in research and development aren't available to discuss such matters with individual physicians due to their busy schedules. I would recommend, however, that you express these concerns with your chief physician, Doctor Moore. I'm sure he'd be able to help resolve any questions you may have."

Job sighed. "Alright, Tom. I appreciate your help. I'll be sure to keep in touch if I have any more question's that come to mind." He hung up the phone, sagged back into his chair and stared upward at the ceiling in frustration. After a moment he drew the small notepad from his pocket, scribbled down a quick reminder to himself, then left his office.

As he made his way down the hall he stopped and knocked on Ed Burrows' door, but there was no response. He then proceeded towards the nurses' station where Julie, the student nurse, was seated in the small kiosk intently reading a resident file on the desk in front of her.

"Good morning, Julie," Job said.

Julie looked up. "Oh, good morning, Doctor Anderson."

"Isn't Margaret working today?" he asked.

Julie shook her head. "She took the day off. I think this was her way of punishing me for making a mess of all the files yesterday."

Job laughed. "If you want a little advice, I think you might want to stay on that woman's good side. She's not to be trifled with."

"That sounds like wise advice," Julie said, smiling broadly.

"Listen, Julie. Have you seen Doctor Burrows this morning? You know the guy I'm talking about? Comes up to my chin. Disheveled looking. Face like a tired old mule."

Julie laughed. "I don't think I've seen anyone that would fit that description. But I did see Doctor Burrows heading over to the dining room about fifteen minutes ago."

"I appreciate the help." Job said with a grin. "I'll come by later this morning to make sure the residents haven't been too hard on you."

Job continued down the long corridor, passing the rooms of several residents. At the end of the hall he climbed a half-dozen stairs, pushed open the door to the dining room and found Ed sitting by himself, sipping his coffee from a large porcelain mug. Job crossed the room and dropped into a chair across from his friend. "Good morning, Ed."

"Morning, Job." Ed replied.

"You look beat," Job said. "Did you have a rough night?"

"As a matter of fact, I was called into the emergency room at the hospital last night. There was a bad car accident on the 404, so I was there until three in the morning."

"Really? So are you planning on doing a double shift today?"

"No, but I know that we've been short staffed this week, so I thought I would at least come in for a few of hours this morning." Ed took another quick sip of his coffee, then looked back up at his friend. "So what's on your mind, Job?"

"Well," Job said, hesitating for a moment. "It's not that I want to heap any more coal on to your fire, but I actually came down here to ask you for a small favour."

Ed gave Job a thin lipped smile. "I've always got time to help a friend," he said. "What can I do for you?"

Job leaned forward, lowering his voice. "I understand that you've been in contact with a few of the executives over at Ellis Pharmaceuticals?"

Ed nodded. "I actually served on their Board of Directors for a few months, and so did Doctor Moore for that matter."

"I thought I heard you mention that during one of our morning meetings," Job replied. "Which is why I was hoping you could shed a bit more light on some of the new drugs that we've been getting from Ellis. I've never even heard of these new meds, nor are they written up in any of the current medical journals. I'm getting the distinct impression that Ellis isn't doing a substantial amount of research on some of their products, which I find rather disconcerting."

Ed shrugged. "These kind of things are normally regulated by the government, but Ellis Pharmaceuticals has been taking all kinds of shortcuts for years. Why do you think I got off the

Board? To be honest, I don't think John Moore suffers from the same convictions that I do. If it was my decision, we'd have nothing to do with that company."

Job nodded. "That certainly helps to shed a bit more light on the subject. I really appreciate your candour, Ed."

Ed took a long swallow of his coffee and grinned at Job. "I didn't get a lot of sleep last night, so you caught me with my guard down. Just know that I don't want to get stuck in the middle of things, so this information stays between us."

"I understand your position," Job said. "Look, Ed, you've had a lot of experience in this particular area. What do we really know about *these new drugs* - about the long-term side effects that these medications might have on our residents?"

Ed shrugged indifferently. "Your guess is as good as mine. Like you said, the long-term side effects haven't undergone much rigorous testing. That's yet another price we pay for government cutbacks and a blatant lack of regulations on *big-pharma*."

"That's what I need help with," Job said. "Would you be able to get in touch with someone in Research and Development at Ellis, and get a bit more information?"

Ed hesitated for a long moment, before nodding his approval. "Leave it with me and I'll see what I can do. Although I can't make any promises, understand?"

"That's all I can ask for," Job agreed. "I appreciate your help, Ed."

Ed glanced down at his watch. "Well, I'd better get started on my rounds or someone's going to have a fit. I've been here for longer than I'd planned already."

"Get some rest, Ed," Job said rising to his feet. "You look terrible."

Job followed his colleague out of the dining room and into the corridor where Ed turned

to him as they stopped by a set of doors leading into a separate wing of the facility. "What's on your agenda this morning?" Ed asked. "More pep talks and a shoulder to cry on?"

Job laughed. "Just doing what comes naturally, my friend."

"Keep it up," Ed said encouragingly.

"God willing," Job said as he watched Ed disappear through the large set of double doors. He then made his way slowly down the remainder of the hallway towards his office. As he was approaching his office door he glanced over at the nurses' station and noticed that Julie was in the middle of an animated conversation with a resident, Mel Chilocolwich.

"Listen, lady," Mel said in a loud voice. "I want to know what you've have done with my pension cheque. It's supposed to be here the first of every month. Where is it?"

Job could see the nervous look on the young woman's face.

"I don't know where your cheque is, Mel," Julie said. "Why don't I check with the administration office to see if they might know?"

Mel's face turned even redder. "I already talked to them!" Mel screamed, slamming his fist on the counter. "They said they've never even seen my cheques! They told me that my pension is deposited right into my bank account. As if they would know! I've been getting those cheques for over fifteen years, and I want to know who took it!"

"I don't know what else to tell you, Mel," she said, glancing over at Job.

Job approached the irate resident and placed a hand on his elbow. "Take it easy, Mel," He said. "Why don't we both sit down and you can tell me what's going on?"

Mel turned to the doctor with a confused look on his face. "I just want them to give me my pension cheque." He said. "Somebody stole it from me!"

"Well," Job said, "Julie already told you that she doesn't have it, so let's just try to relax and we'll see if we can figure out what we can do from here." He steered Mel over to a table in the common area, then went over to the coffee station and poured two cups.

"If you ask me, I think they're stealing my money," Mel said in a more subdued tone as Job returned with his coffee. "Money. That's all they're interested in around here!"

Job nodded understandingly. "Keep in mind, Mel, that if you have any concerns you'd like to address, all you need to do is ask. But it doesn't help matters when you carry on like that and harass the nursing staff. You should know that they only want's best for you."

Mel's shoulders sagged and a defeated expression took over his face.

"I've been meaning to ask you, Mel," Job said. "How have you been feeling these last few days? I've noticed that you've been prescribed a few new medications."

"What do you mean, *how have I been feeling?* Do you mean *am I still crazy?*"

"No, Mel," Job said. "I mean generally? How have you been feeling?"

Mel shrugged, taking a sip of his coffee. "I feel about the same as when I got here, only now I've got these vultures circling over me, trying to steal my money."

"Well," Job said. "I can assure you that I'm not interested in your money, but I wish you would talk to me or the other doctors when you have a problem like this."

Mel shrugged again, now staring intently at the coffee in front of him.

"I'll take a look into your concerns, Mel, but I'm going to need you to calm down." Job said. "I'll try to find out where your cheques have gone."

Mel grunted. "You do that."

Job grinned, getting to his feet. "I'll be in touch with you later, Mel."

Job turned from the table and walked back towards the nurses' station. Julie's face had regained most of its natural colour and a thin smile was now clearly visible. "Let's try not to stir up the residents too much," Job said in a low voice, grinning broadly. "We don't like it when they get too excited, we go through too many nurses that way."

Julie smiled nervously, "If we get any more residents like Mel, I think I'll end up like one of the residents before you know it."

Job laughed and started back down the hall towards his office.

Chapter Seven

Job stood outside Mae's door for a moment, head bowed, then quickly gave a couple of brisk knocks. A moment later the door swung open and Mae stood there looking up at him.

"Please, come in, Doctor Anderson."

"Good morning, Mae," Job said. "Are you ready for our session?"

"Sure. I'll just get my sweater." She turned and retrieved a violet-coloured sweater lying on the back of a chair, draped it around her shoulders and was turning to rejoin Job when a commotion in the hall attracted their attention.

"It's here! It's finally here!" a voice shouted from the corridor.

Job stepped out of the way as a short, heavy-set man carrying a long box pushed past him, and barged into Mae's room.

"Look Mae, it's here," the man shouted. "It finally arrived!"

Mae's face lit up. "That's great, Phil. You've been waiting weeks for that to arrive."

"What do you have there, Phil?" Job asked.

The disheveled man turned and noticed Job for the first time. "Oh, hi, Doctor Anderson! Look what came in this mail, it's my old fiddle!" He set the box down on Mae's bed, yanked off the lid and pulled out a dark brown violin.

Job took a step closer, examining the instrument politely. "Wow! That sure is a beauty, Phil. Why don't you play a tune for us?"

Phil's eyes opened wide as he looked up at the doctor in surprise. "I'd be glad to," he said with a wide grin, "But first I'll check to see if this thing's still in tune." He tossed the small

wooden box into a corner of Mae's room, drew the fiddle up to his chin and began drawing the bow across each of the strings, adjusting the tuning knobs accordingly.

"I have an idea," Job said suddenly. "Why don't we all move down to the common area and I'll see if I can round up a few of the other residents to hear you play?"

"Sure," Phil said. "I'm pretty rusty, though."

"Perhaps Mae can accompany you on her flute."

"Oh, I don't think so," Mae said, shaking her head. "I mean I'd love to accompany you, Phil, but I haven't played for an audience in such a long time."

Just then William James poked his head into the room. "What's going on?"

"William," Job said, beckoning him into the room. "You arrived just in time. Why don't you see if you can rustle up a few of the other residents for a little concert down in the common area? Phil's going to play a few tunes for us on his fiddle."

William gave his head several vigorous nods. "Sure, Doc. I'll be right back with a hand-picked audience." He hesitated for a moment. "Is black tie required?"

Job laughed. "Casual dress is fine, William."

"Right-o," William said before disappearing down the hall.

Phil laughed distractedly, still carefully tuning his instrument.

"How are you making out there, Phil?" Job asked.

"I think I'm getting close," Phil said. "It's just hard to tune this blasted thing without a tuner. I knew that I should have ordered one when I sent for my fiddle."

"I may be able to help you with that," Mae volunteered. She bent over the desk, retrieving her piccolo from the top drawer. "I can give you a starting note with this," she blew a crisp note

on her instrument. "Let's try tuning it to *A*, Phil."

Phil nodded enthusiastically, lightly adjusting the tuning knobs as Mae patiently indicated the correct note for each string.

A few minutes later when Phil finally seemed to be satisfied with the sound, Job ushered them out into the hallway and down the corridor to the common area.

No sooner had they arrived than William returned, leading half a dozen residents into the common area. He then dropped into a chair at the very front of the small crowd, grinning from ear-to-ear. "Alright," he said. "Let's get this show on the road!"

The other residents, seeming eager for the event, turned in Phil's direction, smiling and clapping their hands. "Come on, Phil," one of them urged. "Play us a song!"

Phil stepped to the front of the group, the fiddle now snugged-up firmly under his chin. "Are there any requests?" he asked.

Karen Moir raised her hand. "How about *Fiddler's Green*?" she said. "My dad used to play that song back home whenever it was raining."

"Good suggestion, Karen," Job said, taking a seat next to Mae. "Do you know how to play that one, Phil?"

Phil nodded eagerly. "There's not a fiddler in the land who doesn't know that tune by heart," he said, raising his bow with a flourish. "Join in if you know the words." He brought the bow down on the strings and began to gently nurse the beautiful strains of the classic fiddle tune. As the first notes washed over the people gathered around him, all eyes were transfixed on the man with the fiddle. Phil's crackly voice soon joined in and by the end of the first verse several of the residents had begun singing along.

Job looked out over the people gathered around him, feeling a small sense of pride at the uplifted faces and voices. Mae seemed especially captured by the extraordinary moment, her face having lost the tension that Job had become so accustomed to seeing. A few moments later, when the song came to an abrupt end, William and the others applauded enthusiastically as Phil grinned and took an awkward bow.

"That was great, Phil," Job said. "Now how about we play something a little more upbeat – are you familiar some more toe-tapping music?"

Phil scratched his head thoughtfully. "Toe-tapping, eh ... I think I know just the one." He carefully raised the fiddle back to his chin.

An abrupt screech sounded from the fiddle as Phil readied himself, then the energetic sounds of a traditional Celtic song rang through the room. Job immediately found himself tapping his feet to the melody. He glanced again at the small gathering, to the large shining eyes of the residents transfixed on the fiddler before them. He knew that many of the residents would forget the concert by day's end, but he was grateful to see the momentary elation that was spread across each of their faces. He then turned his attention to William who was clapping and moving his feet to the beat of the rollicking melody. Suddenly William shuffled to the centre of the room, lowered his head and started into a frantic jig, his slippered feet moving in time to the music, his head bobbing up and down, his arms bent, elbows moving side to side like a tightrope walker trying to catch his balance, a huge smile creasing his weathered face.

"That's the spirit, William!" Job said encouragingly. "Come on everyone, we can't let William have all the fun!" He pulled a few members of the audience to their feet and gently guided them over to where William was performing, and as he did he happened to look up to see

Ed Burrows standing by the nurses' station.

"What's going on here?" Ed asked with a smile. "Why wasn't I invited to the party?"

Job waved his friend over. "Ed. I thought you'd gone home already. Why don't you come over here and help me get some of these wallflowers on their feet?"

Ed turned and gave Julie, a beckoning wave. "Come on, Julie. Give me a hand."

As the remaining residents got to their feet, Job turned his attention towards Mae, who was sitting quietly in the corner. "Come on, Mae, why don't you come and join us?"

Mae shook her head. "No," she said in a soft voice. "That's all right."

"You don't know what you're missing," Job urged.

Mae looked up at Job, a thin smile slowly creeping across her face. "Alright." She finally said, slowly getting to her feet.

Job took her by the hand and led her over to where the others were dancing.

Using William's unusual shuffling maneuvers as their model, Mae and Job began to move around the floor in time to the music, both grinning broadly. "See what I mean," Job whispered. "It's not so bad once you get going, right?"

Mae laughed softly. "I suppose it isn't."

Suddenly the tune came to a dramatic halt.

Job and the others looked over to Phil, who was sweating profusely, but grinning from ear-to-ear. "I forgot how much playing this thing wears me out!"

"I can see what you mean." Job said with a sympathetic smile. "Do you have the energy to play one more fast one for us, Phil. We're just getting warmed up."

"I'm one step ahead of you, Doc." Phil immediately returned the fiddle to his chin and

began scratching out another tune. “*Turkey in the Straw*,” he announced.

Once again the residents moved about the improvised dance floor, shuffling energetically to the music. Ed had dragged Julie over to the very centre of the floor and was doing what Job supposed was a strange version of the Highland Fling. Julie was standing almost motionless facing in his direction, watching him with an amused expression on her face. “You don't get out to dance very much do you Doctor Burrows?”

“Not really.” Ed said with a chuckle. “But at least I'm trying!”

Job waded in among the small troupe of dancers and pulled Ed aside. “I have to go somewhere, Ed. Would you mind keeping an eye on things for a few minutes?”

Ed nodded and patted his friend on the shoulder. “No problem.”

Job then returned to where Mae was standing and drew her away from the others. She looked at him with a puzzled expression.

“What's going on, Doctor Anderson?” she asked.

“I just had an idea that I think you might like,” he said. “How would you feel about going out for a drive with me?”

She looked at him nervously. “You want to take me for a ride in your car?” She paused again, glancing away from Job. “I don't know...”

“Don't worry, Mae,” Job said reassuringly. “Everything will be okay. Why don't you put your piccolo away and meet me at the front entrance? We'll be back in no time at all.”

Chapter Eight

When Job turned the corner at the front of the building he could see that Mae was already standing by the entrance, her jacket tucked neatly under one arm. He pulled a large, weathered, Land Rover to the curb, where it sputtered a few times and died. He then hopped out of the vehicle and walked over to the passenger side, opening the door for Mae.

"Wow," Mae said. "Your car isn't exactly what I expected."

Job grinned self consciously. "Not to worry. It may be old, but it's perfectly safe. I even had seat-belts installed last year."

As he climbed back into the front seat Mae glanced at him nervously. "Are you sure this thing can take us to wherever it is we're going?" she asked.

"*Old Jehu's* never let me down yet," Job said, giving the dashboard a loving pat. He turned the key to the ignition and the motor rolled over several times. With a sheepish grin Job then proceeded to pump the accelerator furiously while gently rocking back and forth in his seat. After several long seconds the motor finally caught and reluctantly roared to life.

Job sat back and turned to his passenger. "Purrs like a kitten!" he said triumphantly.

Mae turned her head slightly towards him, managing a nervous smile.

"Don't worry, Mae," Job said. "We'll make it to our destination. I promise."

"Where *are* we going?" Mae asked.

Job smiled. "It'll be a surprise. Do you trust me?"

"I think I'm starting to." She replied.

"Good," Job said. "Then let's get going."

He pulled the vehicle away from the curb, then merged with traffic on the street outside

the facility. "So, how long have you been interested in music?" He asked.

"For as long as I can remember," Mae replied. "My parents encouraged me to learn an instrument at a young age. Then in high school I fell in love with the flute."

"It's a rare talent." Job responded. "Do you play any other instruments?"

She nodded. "I've tinkered around with the clarinet and a few other wind instruments, but my real passion is the flute. More specifically the piccolo."

"What kind of music do you normally play?"

"I enjoy Celtic music, like Phil," she said with a smile. "But I mostly enjoy classical."

"Do you come from a musical family?"

"Well, Sarah has taken a few piano lessons, but she didn't really keep it up."

Job nodded. "You know I think Sarah really looks up to you."

Mae shrugged. "Oh, I don't think I'm anyone Sarah should be looking up to anymore."

"I disagree," Job responded, turning onto a side street. "You really have a lot to offer, Mae. You're very kind and thoughtful, someone that others naturally gravitate towards. And you have a very compassionate soul... not to mention your God-given musical abilities."

Mae turned her head and looked out at the passing buildings.

"Do you think Sarah would want to learn an instrument if you taught her?" Job asked.

"Sarah's never really been to interested in music lessons," Mae responded. "Or even her school-work for that matter. High school isn't exactly her forte."

"I remember my own high school days." Job replied. "Not the easiest time of my life."

Mae looked down at her hands folded in her lap. "High school isn't for everyone."

"As a teenager I didn't get a whole lot of attention from my parents," Job continued.

"They seemed to be having their own problems, and my sister was quite a lot younger than me, so we didn't spend a lot of time together. Sarah's very fortunate to have a sister like you."

"It looks like you turned out fine," Mae said encouragingly.

"I appreciate that, Mae." Job said. "Although I'm sure that comment would surprise more than a few of my old friends and high school teachers."

Mae turned towards Job, a puzzled look on her face. "Do you hear music?"

Job laughed. "It looks like my cover's blown, but at least I made it this far without spoiling the surprise." He glanced over at his passenger. "I heard about a free concert today down by the waterfront and for some reason I immediately thought of you."

"A concert!" She looked eagerly over at Job. "Who's performing?"

"If I'm not mistaken it's the local symphony, but I'm not exactly certain. If we manage to find a parking spot I think we should be able to catch most of it."

"There's someone leaving right now," Mae said excitedly, pointing to a car that was exiting a spot they were about to pass.

"Perfect!" Job said, swinging his vehicle into the empty parking space. "That was fortunate," he said, unbuckling his belt. "Now let's see what this concert's all about."

As they opened the car doors, the sound of music seemed to fill the vehicle. Job circled the car, took Mae's arm and led her down a stone walkway towards the water. In the distance they could see a large crowd gathered. Many had spread blankets on the grass and were enjoying a picnic, others were seated on lawn chairs and benches. Still others were standing by the rope barrier near the shoreline. All eyes seemed to be fixed on a large floating platform, anchored a stone's throw from the shore. On it were about a dozen members of the local symphony.

Job could see the excitement shining from Mae's face as he led her through the crowd to a small open area apart from the other spectators.

"I think it's safe to say that you know more about this kind of music than I do," Job said. "Do you know which tune they're playing?"

Job heard Mae let out an exasperated sigh. "It's actually referred to as a *composition*, Doctor Anderson, not a *tune*."

Job raised his hands in mock horror. "A thousand pardons, my lady."

A smile flitted across her face as she turned her attention back to the musicians. "If I'm not mistaken, this particular *composition* is from Richard Strauss' Alpine Symphony."

"I see." Job nodded thoughtfully. "Is it any good?"

"It's interesting that the symphony would choose such a number," Mae added. "This particular piece was one of Strauss' largest works, usually requiring over a hundred musicians to perform as it was written. You rarely hear it played in concert due to that very reason."

"That's interesting," Job agreed.

"I imagine they're only playing an excerpt from it," Mae suggested. "The entire work is nearly an hour long, and this is the most recognizable piece."

"Wow, you really do know your music," Job said admiringly.

"Some people enjoy writing poems, other people enjoy reading books. I just love everything there is to know about music, especially classical music. I suppose I'm just one of those people who are passionate about the symphony."

"Now that's probably something worth getting excited about," Job said, turning his attention back towards the music. When he glanced over at Mae a few moments later it was

obvious to see that she was completely taken up with the performance.

For the next several minutes they stood in silence, listening to the strains of the music as it drifted over the water before them. When the performance finally came to an end, Mae drew in a deep breath and turned back in Job's direction. "I can't thank you enough for bringing me out here, Doctor Anderson. It really was a wonderful idea."

Job smiled to himself. "I thought it might be," he said quietly.

* * * * *

When Job and Mae arrived back at the Residence, Job could tell that although Mae had enjoyed the afternoon immensely, she still seemed eager to be back to her familiar surroundings. "Did you enjoy the concert?" he asked.

Mae nodded. "I did," she replied. "Our family had season tickets to the symphony, but I didn't get to go very often with Alex. It brought back a lot of wonderful memories."

They had just passed through the main doors by the nurses' station when they were startled by a loud shriek. Mae looked up, her eyes brightening.

"Sarah!" she shouted.

Sarah hurried over to Mae and gave her a long hug.

"Sarah," Mae said again. "I thought you were in school today."

"You know how private schools are, Mae," Sarah said grinning widely. "I doubt if any of the teachers will even notice that I'm missing."

"What are you doing here?" Mae asked.

"I came here to see you, of course," Sarah replied. She then dropped her gaze, avoiding eye contact with her sister. "I also wanted to apologize for the way I treated you during my last

visit. I shouldn't have acted so childishly. I'm sorry."

"Oh," Mae said, the colour rising in her face. "That's okay, Sarah."

Sarah then turned to Job. "I was also hoping to talk with Doctor Anderson for a few minutes, that is if he's not too busy."

"I'd be happy to speak with you, Sarah," Job said. "As a matter of fact I do have a couple of minutes to spare, if Mae doesn't mind waiting."

Mae shook her head. "No that's fine with me," she said. "I'll just be in my room whenever you're finished, Sarah."

"Alright," Job said, leading Sarah down the hall. "Let's talk somewhere more private."

As they stepped inside his office Job motioned Sarah to a seat by his desk. "Make yourself at home," he said, dropping into an armchair across from her. "What can I do for you?"

"Well, I watched the videos you gave me the last time I was here," she said, hesitating for a moment. "As a matter of fact I watched them all several times."

Job settled back in his chair. "I'm glad to hear that, Sarah. What did you think?"

"Everything that was discussed in those videos was actually brand new to me. I've never really heard anything quite like it before." She paused, collecting her thoughts. "The videos really helped me to understand how Mae must be feeling. I realize now that I've never loved anyone as much as Mae loved Alex, and I think it's important for me to be there for her."

"I think Mae is very fortunate to have a sister like you, Sarah," Job said with a grin. "I hope we'll get to see you around here more often."

"Well, that brings me to the other reason why I wanted to talk to you." She paused and smiled slightly. "The reason why I had watched those videos so many times was because I had

become fascinated with the explanations they gave for why there's so much pain and suffering in the world, and how in spite of these difficulties we can come to understand why bad things sometimes happen to good people. It also brought to mind a lot of unanswered questions that I had, so after I watched the videos I went to talk with the Pastor from our old church."

"Is this the same church that your family attends?" Job asked.

Sarah shook her head. "No. We used to go to Pastor Arnold's church when I was a child, and even though I don't remember much about the teachings of the church, I always remembered the Pastor as being the kind of person who seemed to have all the answers to life's big questions. Unfortunately, the church closed a few years ago and Pastor Arnold retired."

"Did he have the answers you were looking for?" Job asked.

"He did," Sarah said nervously. "Which brings me to the real reason why I wanted to speak with you. I wanted to talk to you about my faith."

"Go ahead, Sarah," Job said encouragingly. "I'm all ears."

She looked up at Job and smiled. "Pastor Arnold explained to me that the reason why there's so much pain and suffering in the world is a result of our sin. The Bible says that we're all separated from God because of our sin, but God sent his only son into the world to die for our sins, so that we can have eternal life. Pastor Arnold told me that all I needed to do to be saved was to place my faith and trust in the one who came to save us, Jesus Christ, and he would forgive me of all my sins. I decided then and there that I was going to give my life to Him."

Job leaned forward, his eyes widening. "That's fantastic, Sarah," he said with a smile. "I'm so proud of you. Remember, if there's anything I can do for you to help you adjust to your new life, just let me know. I'm here to support not only Mae, but you and your family as well."

"Actually there is one more thing I'd like to ask you," she said, pausing for a moment. "As you know, our family is not what you'd call real church-goers, so I was wondering if you'd be able to recommend a good church that I could attend in the city?"

Job thought for a moment. "When I was attending college in your home town I went to a church on the corner of Cook and McKenzie Street. Do you know the one?"

Sarah nodded. "Sure, I drive by that church every day."

"That's a really good church when it comes to teaching the scriptures. The congregation is also very welcoming and I know they'd make you feel right at home."

Job thought for a minute. "Do you own a Bible?"

Sarah nodded. "Sort of. We have an old Bible in my dad's study, but it's more of a family heirloom than anything else – it's not really meant for reading."

Job frowned. "It's always a shame to hear of a Bible that's not being read." He pulled out a business card from his wallet. "Here's the address of a local Bible bookstore owned by an old friend of mine. Why don't you stop by there on your way home and talk to him? I'll call ahead and ask him to put a Bible aside for you. It'll be my treat."

Sarah took the card with a broad smile. "Thanks, Doctor Anderson."

"You're welcome," Job said, getting to his feet. "I'd better not keep you from your visit with Mae, but I'm glad you shared this news with me. You're showing real signs of maturity."

Sarah stood up and walked over to the door. "Thanks again for your help, Doctor Anderson. I really appreciate all of your advice." She stepped out into the hallway, paused, then quickly returned and gave Job a hug. "Wish me luck," she whispered.

Chapter Nine

Job wheeled his Land Rover into an empty parking space near the main entrance of the building. As he stepped out of his vehicle he noticed a light brown-coloured German Sheppard pressed up against the window of the car next to him. "Well, hello there, big fella," Job said, stepping over to the neighbouring vehicle with an outreached hand. Suddenly the dog lunged forward, barking savagely, his snout protruding from the narrow crack in the window.

Job leaped backward several feet almost tripping over his own briefcase. "Good grief!" He said, laughing to himself. "I guess you're not a friendly fella after all." He paused to catch his breath, a broad smile crossing his face. "Although you have given me an idea."

He made his way around the building and stepped through the side entrance, carefully closing the door behind him. He then slipped cautiously down the hallway and into the common area, where he could see Margaret standing in the middle of the lobby, eyes fixed on the television which was blaring from a far corner of the room. Job immediately recognized the program as one of Margaret's favourite soap operas.

Silently he slipped over to the nurses' station and grabbed a rubber band that was wrapped tightly around a pencil holder. Tip-toeing over to Margaret he pulled back on the elastic band and let it go, the missile snapping directly against her backside.

"What in the world!" Margaret jumped and looked frantically around her. "Doctor Anderson, what on earth are you doing?"

Job laughed. "I was just trying to get your attention."

"Why don't you just try calling my name like every other sensible human being?"

"Where's the fun in that?" Job said with a chuckle.

"You could take someone's eye out with that." Margaret asserted.

"Don't worry, Margaret," Job said. "I'm a doctor. I can just pop it back in."

Margaret managed to stifle a smile as she turned off the television with the remote. "Oh, what am I going to do with all of you young doctors."

"Just be thankful that I didn't go with my first instinct, and hide one of the residents in the back seat of your car."

"What changed your mind?" Margaret asked, rolling her eyes.

"This big dog outside almost made me wet myself, so I decided to go with Plan B."

"Thank goodness for that." She replied. "I didn't bring a change of underwear."

"Do you know who owns the German Shepherd in the white car?"

"Oh, you mean Shamus." She replied. "He belongs to Karen Moir's brother."

"It's nice to hear that she has a visitor," Job said, "But I think his dog could do with some intensive counselling himself."

Job glanced down at his watch. "Anyway, my meeting with Doctor Moore and the others isn't for another ten minutes, that is unless they changed the time?"

Margaret heaved another deep sigh. "No, doctor. Same time as always."

"Thanks, Margaret," he said. "I'll talk to you after the meeting." With that he hurried down the hallway to Mae's room and knocked gently on the door. It was several long seconds before he heard a faint, "Come in." When he entered the room he found Mae sitting on the edge of her bed, staring blankly into space, her eyes glazed over.

"Mae?" Job said softly.

Mae seemed to rouse herself, turning her head in Job's direction. "Yes?"

"I was just wondering how your visit with Sarah went yesterday."

For several long seconds Mae simply stared up at Job, frowning in confusion. "Oh yes. We had a nice visit. Sarah seems so different. She was really nice to me."

"I was hoping that would be the case," Job said, smiling broadly. He hesitated as Mae turned and stared blankly at the wall in front of her.

"Are you feeling alright?" Job asked. "You don't seem yourself this morning."

"Oh, I've been feeling a bit funny since I started my new medication."

"New medication?" Job asked. "What do you mean?"

She turned and nodded to a small plastic bottle sitting on her bedside table.

Job walked over and picked up the plastic vial, turning it over in his hand. "Why am I not surprised," he said, mumbling to himself. "When did you start taking these?"

"Doctor Moore gave them to me yesterday." She replied.

He set the bottle back down on the table and returned to the door.

"Try to take it easy, Mae. I'll stop by and see how you're doing a little later."

Job stepped out into the hall, closing the door behind him. He paused for a moment, staring down at the floor then took in a long deep breath. Finally he turned and hurried back down the hallway to his office. There, he dropped into the chair behind his desk and shuffled through the drawers, scooping up a small object which he slipped into the pocket of his jacket. He then left his office, walking briskly down the hall to another office only a few doors down from his own. His knock was greeted by a prompt, "Come in," and he pushed open the door.

Ed rose from his desk, ushering Job inside. "I was hoping you'd stop by this morning.

Were you just heading down to the morning meeting?"

"I was," Job said. "But I wanted to ask you something before our meeting. Have you had any contact yet with the R and D people down at Ellis Pharmaceuticals?"

Ed sat back down at his desk and opened one of the drawers. "It just so happens that I finally got through to that friend of mine I was telling you about." He opened a file folder and removed a sheet of paper. "By the way, I promised my friend that I'd keep his name out of this."

"I understand," Job said. "What did you find out?"

"Well, I did discover a few interesting facts about our friends down at Ellis." He handed the sheet of paper to Job. "Take a look at this."

Job took the page from Ed's hand and scanned the information. "I'll admit I was a bit skeptical at first," Job said. "But I think you may have found a nice piece of evidence here."

Ed smile. "Now remember. You didn't get any of this from me."

"Get what from you?" Job said with a grin.

"I'll see you at the meeting." Ed replied.

Job stepped back out into the hallway and made his way down to the nurses' station, reading the sheet of paper on his way. Margaret was bent over her desk as he approached. She looked up and waved a warning finger in his direction.

"Don't even think about snapping me with another rubber band, Doctor Anderson. I have a red welt on my backside because of you."

Job laughed, then leaned over the desk, scanning the work area.

"Can I help you with something?" Margaret asked testily.

"I was just wondering if you had a copy of the resident prescription form handy."

Margaret removed a clipboard from the hook beside her desk and handed it to Job. "Here it is. Just make sure you return this when you're finished or you'll have to answer to me."

Job took the clipboard and started down the hall to the Conference Room. "Yes, Ma'am," he said over his shoulder.

Job could feel his heart rate begin to accelerate as he approached the large oak doors which led into the meeting room. He hesitated for a moment, steeling his nerves before pushing open the doors and taking his place at the long conference table.

Doctor Moore was already seated, hands folded on his lap in front of him, an impatient expression creasing his face. After a moment he turned to the other doctors seated at the table. "Alright, gentlemen. Let's get this meeting started."

At that moment Ed entered the room and took a seat across from Job. He looked up at Doctor Moore and gave him a sheepish smile. "Sorry I'm late," he said.

"That's quite alright," Doctor Moore said as he banged his gavel on the table. "Is there any new business we need to discuss this morning?"

Job cleared his throat as he assembled his thoughts.

Just then Roger Gardner leaned forward in his chair. "We're having our monthly movie night next week, so I thought we could discuss which film to show."

Job stared vacantly at the man beside him. "If you don't mind, Doctor Gardner, I was hoping we could discuss something a bit more pressing."

Roger leaned back in his chair, swallowing hard. "Well, Doctor Anderson, if you have more pressing matters need discussing, then by all means, feel free."

"I'd like to bring up a matter that has recently become quite concerning to me. It involves

two new antidepressants that are being prescribed to a number of our residents" He took a deep breath, and when he continued to speak, the pitch of his voice rose dramatically. "Not only do I believe that the prescribed amount of these drugs should be under question, but both of these medications still appear to be in the experimental phase, and as such have not even been proven to be safe for consumption. Not only that, but if you take a look at the drug's own inserts, it's clear to see that the side effects alone could potentially do more harm than good."

Job could feel the eyes of all those around the table boring in on him. He knew that his abrupt approach would be risky, but was unable to stop himself.

"I understand that we all want to see a positive change in our residents," Job continued. "But I don't think this particular approach is benefiting anyone at this point."

Doctor Moore cleared his throat officiously, drawing the attention of the participants away from Job. "Listen, Doctor Anderson, this institution has been prescribing various kinds of serotonin reuptake inhibitors for a number of years now, and there are many doctors in this facility that would swear to their effectiveness. The medications you're referring to are simply an improved brand of an already proven drug. Personally, I don't see a real problem."

"Improved?" Job said loudly. "How can you improve on a product for which there is very little scientific evidence that supports its effectiveness in the first place? More than a number of clinical studies indicate that these drugs have been known to actually enhance depression, and in many cases increase the chances of psychotic behaviour, including suicidal tendencies."

"That's utter nonsense," Roger said. "Studies have shown that a number of patients who were prescribed these exact medications have dramatically increased their chances of making a stable recovery. The results have been nothing less than remarkable."

"Remarkable?" Job almost shouted. "How can you say that these drugs have had remarkable results when the medication itself is still in early testing? On top of that, even the unpublished inserts from Ellis Pharmaceuticals state that the common side-effects for this drug include seizures, heart attacks, strokes, and aggressive and psychotic behaviour. Besides, these clinical studies haven't even moved beyond the company's own preliminary trials."

Roger waved his hand dismissively. "You know as well as I do that these companies always have to make those warnings in order to protect themselves from lawsuits."

Job leaned forward in his chair. "If this was simply a case of an honest business trying to protect itself from lawsuits, then we wouldn't be seeing our hospitals flooded with so many individuals suffering from adverse reactions to the same kind of medications."

Doctor Moore removed his glasses and turned slowly towards Job. "Doctor Anderson, you can't honestly be telling us that these kinds of medications are of no benefit to anyone? I am almost certain that every doctor in this room can demonstrate to you that there are a number of anti-depressants that have been of great benefit to countless individuals."

"I'm not saying that all anti-depressants are ineffective," Job continued. "I'm simply trying to express my concerns that these particular medications have not even been adequately tested. I seriously doubt that there's anyone here who's truly benefiting from these drugs, and the fact that they have now been prescribed to a large percentage of our residents during the last few weeks tells me that something's not right." He paused briefly. "When I was appointed to this position by the Board of Directors, I was asked to improve our results by using less conventional methods than the ones currently used. And that's exactly what I intend to do."

"Yes," Doctor Moore replied. "I realize that you have had some success using your more

unconventional methods in the past, but we're running a privately-funded facility here, and we're all accountable to our residents and their families. We can't have our residents leaving this facility before they're ready, otherwise we're the ones who are held responsible."

Job sighed in exasperation. "Prescribing potentially dangerous medications to our residents as a way of keeping them here isn't exactly in their best interests."

"I'm not suggesting we keep them here for any artificial reasons," Doctor Moore replied testily. "We simply have to make sure that they're healthy enough to leave on their own."

"I don't think that's not going to happen if we continue prescribing untested medications to our residents," Job said with a scowl.

"If there's nothing else, Doctor Anderson," Doctor Moore interrupted. "Then I would like to adjourn this meeting so we can all get on with the rest of the work day."

* * * * *

The meeting's confrontation left Job drained. He made his way out of the boardroom and down the corridor to his office, his thoughts still lingered on the encounter he had endured over the last few minutes. As he reached for the door handle of his office, several papers slipped from his grasp and fell to the floor, scattering down the hallway. Job paused, grimacing at the mess at his feet, then slowly sagged to one knee and began retrieving them.

A faint voice from somewhere down the hall nudged into his consciousness.

"Doctor Anderson!"

Job looked up into the smiling face of Sarah Fulton.

"Oh, hello again, Sarah," Job said.

Sarah's smile faded slightly. "Are you alright? You look upset about something."

Job managed a smile. "Oh, it's nothing serious," he said as he climbed to his feet and stuffed the papers into his briefcase. "What brings you by, Sarah?"

"I just dropped by to see my sister," she said excitedly. "And was hoping to talk to you before I left, but the nurse said that you were in a meeting." She paused, looking down at her feet. "Do you have another quick minute to talk?"

Job checked his watch. "As a matter of fact I'm actually running late for an appointment with one of the residents, but I'd be happy to chat with you along the way." He opened his office door and set his briefcase down on the chair by the entrance.

Sarah smiled. "Thank you, Doctor Anderson," she said, falling into step with Job as he led the way back down the hallway.

Job looked at her quizzically. "What was it that you wanted to talk about?"

"Well, it's about the visit I just had with my sister. I don't know what it is, exactly, but she was acting a bit strange. She told me it was her new medication."

Job felt his eyebrows raise as he glanced down at Sarah. "What do you mean by *strange*?" he asked. "Was it something she said, or did?"

"Well," Sarah answered slowly. "I sensed during our last conversation that Mae was started to come around, but today it was almost as if she was back to square one."

Job took Sarah by the arm and steered her over to a bench by the coffee station. "I'm going to need a quick coffee before my meeting," he said. "Would you like something to drink?"

Sarah shook her head. "No thanks," she said. "I have to get going soon, anyway."

Job poured a straight black coffee into a paper cup and sat down beside the young woman. "I was planning to speak to your parents about this, but since you've noticed a change in

Mae already, I'll try to bring you up to date as much as I can."

Sarah eyed Job curiously.

"Unfortunately, due to my confidentiality agreement I'm not able to share as much with you as I would like, but I, too, am also concerned with the medications you had mentioned."

Sarah looked up at Job with a surprised expression. "Is she going to be okay?"

"There's nothing to worry about." Job said with a reassuring smile. "Rest assured that I'm going to do everything I can to make sure Mae is taken care of, but perhaps you could mention to your parents that I'd like to speak with them the next time they come by for a visit."

Chapter Ten

Job leaned back in his plush leather chair, wedged the phone tightly against his chin and stared up at the ceiling of his office in frustration. "I understand your concerns, Mr. Fulton," he said. "If I was in your position I would feel the same way." He quickly moved the receiver away from his ear as the voice on the other end grew louder.

"You're preaching to the choir, Mr. Fulton," he said. "As I mentioned to you earlier, it wasn't my decision to prescribe Mae the additional medications. It was actually Mae's personal physician who made the call, but I can understand how you're feeling."

Job listened patiently as the voice continued. Finally he nodded and leaned over his desk. "Very good, Mr. Fulton. I'll set aside some time this morning to discuss this with you and your wife. I look forward to seeing you and Mrs. Fulton shortly."

As he was setting the receiver back down on the cradle he heard a loud crash coming from somewhere outside his office. He jumped to his feet and hurried out into the hallway. He could see two of the residents on their feet in the common area, both shouting angrily at each other at the top of their voices. As Job raced down the corridor he noticed that Margaret had already left the nurses' station and was hurrying towards the two men.

Mel Chilocolwich and William James were standing over an upturned table, the scattered remnants of a chess game were strewn across the floor in front of them. Margaret was already positioned between the two residents as Job approached.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen," Job said in a loud voice. "What seems to be the problem?"

Margaret and the two men turned towards him.

"This man cheats!" Mel said loudly. "He took my bishop when I wasn't looking!"

William rolled his eyes. "I didn't know you weren't looking, Mel. Besides, It was my turn anyways, and it was a legitimate move."

"You lie!" Mel shouted. "You thought I wasn't looking."

"What does it matter if you weren't looking? It was my turn!" He looked over to Job.

"Doctor Anderson - you know me. I've never cheated in my life."

Margaret reached out and took William by the arm, steering him away from the table.

"Come on, William. Let's go and get a coffee. We'll clean this mess up later."

Job put a hand on Mel's shoulder and guided him gently back into his seat, the big man reluctantly allowing himself to follow Job's lead.

"Mel, you've got to stop having these outbursts," He said gently. "You have to realize that the other residents here need to feel safe. This is their home after all."

Mel's dark eyes flared. "What about me?" he asked angrily. "This is my home too! What's anyone doing for me around here?"

"I thought Doctor Moore has been treating you rather well." Job said in surprise. "Haven't you been going to your regular sessions?"

"Why bother!" Mel grunted. "All Doctor Moore does is shove more pills down my throat, and then asks me how I feel. He treats me like some kind of guinea pig!"

"I understand that you're feeling frustrated," Job said, "You have every right to express these concerns to the rest of the staff, including myself. However, you have to let others know how they can help you. Otherwise we won't know what's wrong."

Job paused, looking down at Mel who was staring glumly back up at him. "Would you be

up for another game of chess tomorrow morning? Say around ten o'clock?"

Mel looked up at him. "As long as there's no cheating!"

Job grinned. "I'll do my best. Can I leave you here to clean up this mess?" he asked, pointing down at the scattered chess pieces on the floor.

Mel paused for a long moment then finally nodded.

"I would appreciate that, Mel." Job gave the older man one last questioning look, then made his way back down the hallway to Mae's room.

The door to her room was open when Job arrived. "Knock, knock." He said as he rapped softly on the door. Mae was sitting at her desk writing on a small yellow notepad. "Your parents just called me on their mobile phone, Mae. They said they'll be dropping by shortly. Would you mind coming over to my office for a few minutes for a quick chat?"

She looked up at him. "Can I finish writing first?"

"Of course," Job said. "Just come and see me when you're done."

He walked back to his office and sagged into the chair behind his desk, exhaling loudly. He then picked up the phone and dialed the number for John Moore's office. The secretary answered. "Doctor Moore's Office."

"Hi Patty, could I speak with Doctor Moore, please?" Job asked.

"I'm sorry, Doctor Anderson, but he just left for the dining room."

Job thanked the secretary and was returning the phone to its cradle when he heard a loud knock on his door. He glanced up to see Mr. and Mrs. Fulton enter the office.

Job rose from his chair and beckoned to the sofa across from him. "Welcome, folks. It's great to see you again. Please, have a seat and make yourself comfortable."

Mrs. Fulton gave him a tight-lipped smile. "Thank you, Doctor Anderson." Her husband unbuttoned his overcoat and dropped onto the sofa beside his wife.

"Would you like a cup of tea or coffee?" Job asked.

"No, thank you," Mr. Fulton replied abruptly. "But we would like to know why we had to find out from our youngest daughter that Mae has been placed on additional medications without our knowledge. I want to know who's responsible for this change!"

Job let out a deep sigh. "I understand your frustration, and I apologize for not contacting you earlier, but I only found out about these changes myself."

"How is it that you just found out?" Mrs. Fulton asked. "Aren't you her doctor?"

"It is true that I am one of the residence's full-time doctors, but the individual responsible for Mae's primary care is actually our chief physician, Doctor Moore."

"Why didn't he inform you of the change?" Mr. Fulton asked.

"I think that would have been appropriate, given the circumstances," Job said. "However, as her primary physician, Doctor Moore is more than capable of making his own decisions, so it's not really necessary that he run such decisions by me for approval."

Just then Mae pushed open the office door and stepped tentatively into the room. Job and her father both got to their feet. "Hi Mum. Hi Dad."

"Come in, Mae," Job said, motioning her into the room.

Mae hung by the door for an instant before crossing over to an armchair beside her parents. Her mother leaned forward. "How are you feeling, dear?"

Mae glanced self-consciously at her mother, then dropped her eyes to the floor in front of her. "I'm doing alright." she said quietly.

Her mother looked up at Job, a worried expression in her eyes.

Mr. Fulton cleared his throat. "Is there anything that you can do for Mae, Doctor Anderson?" he asked. "After all, you are one of the resident doctors, so you should have a say in the decision making process, shouldn't you?"

"Unfortunately each of our residents has his or her own personal physician," Job said. "However, what I can do is take you down to see Doctor Moore, that way you'll be able to discuss any of your concerns with him directly."

"Then what are we waiting for," Mr. Fulton said, getting to his feet.

Job pushed back from his desk. "Alright then, follow me."

Mrs. Fulton turned back to her daughter. "Mae, why don't we meet you back in your room? Our visit with Doctor Moore shouldn't take long."

Mae stood up and led the way out into the hallway. She gave her parents a nervous glance before heading slowly down the hallway towards her room.

"Lead the way, doctor," Mr. Fulton said eagerly.

Job led the way down the hall to the dining area on the East side of the building. The large room was well-appointed with mahogany tables and chairs, as well as a luxurious-looking crystal chandelier hanging overhead. Doctor Moore was seated at a table across the room from them eating his lunch. Only a small number of other diners were scattered throughout the room.

As Job and the Fultons approached his table, Doctor Moore looked up at them, the irritation clearly showing on his face.

"Doctor Moore, I believe you know the Fultons." Job said nonchalantly.

Doctor Moore remained in his seat and reached for his coffee cup, his eyes fixed on the

visitors before him. "To what do we owe the pleasure?" he asked.

"This isn't exactly a pleasure trip," Mr. Fulton said. "We've just been informed by Doctor Anderson that you've prescribed some new anti-depressants for our daughter this past week, and we're more than a little concerned that she's not reacting well to these medications."

"Well," Doctor Moore said, taking another bite of his sandwich. "Sometimes new medications can take a few days to get used to, I'm sure she'll be back to normal soon."

"Adjusting to the medication is not the issue," Mr. Fulton said angrily. "We don't approve of your decision to prescribe these new medications in the first place!"

Doctor Moore wiped his mouth with a napkin and then leaned back in his chair, carefully eyeing the three individuals in front of him. "Mr. and Mrs. Fulton, with all due respect, I am Mae's primary physician. The one you have entrusted with your daughter's care. I'm also the person responsible for how this particular facility has been running for the past twelve years, so I'd appreciate it if you left such decisions to my own discretion."

"Doctor Moore," Mr. Fulton said, "I am the one paying the bills for Mae's care, and I have also been a generous donor to this facility. I would have hoped that these factors would bear some weight in the decision-making process."

"I am aware that you have supported our facility in the past and we appreciate your generosity, and we certainly will take your concerns into consideration, but may I remind you that Mae is not a minor. She's old enough to make her own decisions."

Mr. Fulton stared down at the floor for a moment, obviously trying to contain his anger. Finally he turned to the doctor, his face red, the veins now standing out on his forehead. "You know full well that Mae is not capable of making her own decisions at this point in her life."

"I understand your concerns," Doctor Moore said with a nod, "But I am the one who's ultimately responsible for her recovery. Now if you don't mind, I'd like to finish my lunch before I continue with my rounds. If you'd like to discuss this matter further, feel free to get in touch my secretary so we can set up a time for a proper meeting."

Mrs. Fulton tugged on her husband's arm. "Let's go, John. I don't want to leave Mae alone for too long, she'll be wondering where we are."

Job nodded. "Yes, why don't the two of you go and spend some time with Mae. I'd like to have a moment to speak with Doctor Moore."

Mr. Fulton allowed himself to be ushered out of the dining room by his wife while Job crossed to the other side of the table and sat down.

Doctor Moore glared at him for several long seconds, the anger now showing on his face. "You've got a lot of nerve bringing them in here while I'm eating, Job."

Job straightened in his chair. "I apologize for the intrusion, sir, but I hope you can understand where this family is coming from. They're simply not going to let this matter drop."

There was an awkward silence as Job considered his words carefully.

"I'm afraid I would have to concur with the Fultons," Job continued. "I don't see any reason why Mae would benefit from taking these new medications - especially since she was making so much encouraging progress before these meds were prescribed."

Doctor Moore set his coffee down on the table and stared intently at the younger man for a moment. "You know, Doctor Anderson, I realize that you have been placed in this facility by authorities higher than me, but don't think for a moment that I won't bring in a mediator from the Board of Directors to sort out this little problem. Need I remind you that I am the one who bears

responsibility for all of the decisions made in this facility."

Job nodded. "If that's the route you wish to take then I would certainly welcome it. I am sure a fresh set of eyes would be helpful in this particular situation. Perhaps a mediator could shed some light on whether or not these new medications are really necessary."

"I could be wrong," Doctor Moore admitted sarcastically, "But I'm sure that the members of the Board are well aware of the fact that this is an institution for mental health."

Job got slowly to his feet, the frustration now showing on his face. "Then why don't we allow them the final decision," he finally said. "Enjoy the rest of your meal, sir."

Doctor Moore gave him a broad smile and raised his cup. "I will."

Chapter Eleven

Job leaned cautiously over the chessboard and moved his bishop forward several spaces. He held his index finger atop the chess piece for several long seconds as he examined the rest of the board. "I think that should do it."

"Are you sure about that?" Mel asked doubtfully.

Job looked up at the other man. "Are you trying to psyche me out, Mel?"

Mel leaned back in his chair and eyed the doctor suspiciously. "I don't need to play mind games in order to win at chess," he said with a slight sneer. "I've been playing this game since I was a young boy in Russia. I've even beaten grand masters!"

Job finally removed his finger from the piece, then folded his hands across his lap. "How long has it been since you've lost a game?"

"I never lose," Mel said defiantly.

Job shrugged. "It's all right to lose," he said. "No one wins all of the time."

"That's not true." Mel bent forward and moved his queen two spaces to the left. "I win all of the time," he remarked. "Check."

Job surveyed the chessboard and at the same time was suddenly aware that Karen had quietly moved up behind him and was peering over his shoulder. He glanced up at the dishevelled-looking woman. "Do you have any suggestions, Karen?"

"No cheating!" Mel shouted loudly.

Job laughed. "I was only kidding, Mel. I'm not going to cheat. I'll play you fair and square." He continued to examine the board carefully, looking for a way to turn the tables on his opponent. Finally he slipped his remaining rook between Mel's queen and king.

When he removed his finger from the piece, Mel once again leaned carefully over the board. "Now, I go in for the kill," he said. He slid his queen to one of the corner squares and sat back smugly. "That should do it," he said with a grim smile.

Job studied the board. With great deliberation he picked up his bishop and moved it several squares closer to Mel's king, again holding his finger in place. After a moment he removed his finger and settled back in his chair. "Check," he said softly.

"What?" Mel quickly straightened in his chair, bringing his face to within inches of the board as he studied the situation. "How can this be?" he said in a loud voice.

"Don't worry," Job said. "It's not checkmate, so the game's not over yet."

Mel looked up at him, his eyes blazing. "Nobody beats me at chess. I haven't lost a game of chess since I was little boy ..."

"That's not true," Job said with a smile. "I watched William beat you the other day. So how can you tell me that you haven't lost a game since you were a boy?"

"He's a cheater - that William James," Mel said. "He doesn't know the rules. He just moves his pieces anywhere he wants. Nobody beats Mel unless they cheat."

"Come on, Mel. I've played William before and he's also a really good chess player. There are a lot of people who are good at chess, other than yourself. You should take pride in the abilities God gave you rather than always trying to make other people feel inferior."

Mel grunted. "I still think he cheated."

Job pushed back from the table and got to his feet. "I'll tell you what, Mel. Why don't I let you cool off for a few minutes, and we can continue this game another time?"

Mel shrugged indifferently.

"You're a good opponent, Mel," Job said gesturing down at the chessboard. "I'm sure you'll figure out a way to turn the tables on me in no time."

Job turned and patted Karen warmly on the shoulder. "Karen, did I mention how lovely you're looking this morning? Is that a new bathrobe you're wearing?"

Karen blushed slightly, "No. It's the same one I was wearing yesterday." She said, turning her head away from Job in embarrassment.

"You'd better be careful, Karen, or before you know it all of the male residents will be chasing after you," Job said teasingly.

Karen gave him another uncomfortable smile.

"Oh," Job said, grinning broadly. "I can see that was your plan all along." With that he started off down the hall towards his office. He was no more than half-way there when he could hear the distinct sounds of music coming from Mae's room.

The door to Mae's room was open and when he stepped inside he could see Phil standing by the window playing a slow rhythmic waltz on his violin. Mae was seated by her desk, playing along on her piccolo. Someone had pushed Mae's bed into the corner and there in the middle of the room was her sister Sarah and William, dancing arm-in-arm, moving along to the melody.

"What's going on in here?" Job asked, a wide smile covering his face.

"Come in and join us, Doc," William said, beckoning him forward.

Sarah left her dancing partner momentarily and clasped Job by the arm, pulling him into the middle of the floor. Together the three of them danced and swayed their way back and forth across the small room, keeping time with the rhythm of the music.

As he was trying his best to stay in step with Sarah and William, Job kept one interested

eye fixed on Mae, who was now completely absorbed in playing her piccolo. Finally Job sagged into a nearby chair in exhaustion.

"Okay," he gasped. "I think that's it for me. I don't know how you two do it."

William stopped in front of Job, seeming to catch his breath. "You're only as young as you feel, Doc, and right now I feel like taking a nap."

Job laughed, looking over at Sarah's smiling face.

"Thanks for dancing with me, William," she said. She turned her attention to the fiddle player. "And you too, Phil, you really are a fantastic musician."

Phil performed a sweeping bow. "It's been the greatest of pleasures, my lady."

Taking William by the arm, Phil led his friend towards the door, both men stopping to give their appreciative audience one last wave before exiting.

As the door closed behind them Job turned to Sarah. "I'll bet you didn't expect to hear a concert during your visit today, did you?"

Sarah laughed. "I certainly didn't expect to see so many talented people in this place." She looked over at her Mae who had slipped her piccolo back into her desk drawer. "And one of the most talented musicians just happens to be my very own sister," she added.

Mae blushed. "Thank you, Sarah. Why don't you sit down, you look exhausted."

Sarah dropped down onto a corner of the bed and let out a long sigh. "That was a lot of fun." She said. "It reminds me of all of the good times I had with some of the young people from our church the other evening at our pastor's house."

Job looked up at her. "Did you manage to get out to the church that I suggested?"

"I did, Doctor Anderson. You were right. It turned out to be a great church. As a matter of

fact, I had so much fun that I think I'm going to bring Mae along next Sunday."

Mae smiled at her younger sister. "Oh I think you might be able to twist my arm, Sarah. I'm really proud of the changes you've been making in your life." She glanced over at Job and instinctively looked away. "I guess that's more than I can say about myself."

"Don't be so hard on yourself, Mae," Job said. "You've made a lot of encouraging progress lately. It takes a lot of time to recover from the pain that you've suffered."

A small beeping sound could suddenly be heard from Mae's nightstand. Mae got to her feet and retrieved a small vial of pills from the bookshelf near her bed. She was busy unscrewing the cap when Job spoke up. "Wait a second, Mae."

Job took the bottle from her hands and replaced the cap, setting it carefully back down on the shelf. "Why don't you hold off taking those for the time being."

Mae looked up at Job with a confused expression. "Are you sure it's okay? Doctor Moore said that it was important for me not to miss any of my pills."

"I understand," Job continued. "But it can wait a few more minutes."

Mae sat down in the chair by her desk, fidgeting absently with a handkerchief.

Sarah was looking intently at her older sister, her brow furrowed. "Did you get a chance to read the pamphlet that I gave you during our last visit, Mae?" she asked.

Mae nodded. "I did, Sarah."

"What did you think?" Sarah turned and gave Job a knowing glance.

Mae paused for moment seeming to collect her thoughts. "It was interesting," she said uncertainly. "Although, I really only had a chance to flip through the first few pages."

"What do you think the writer was trying to say?" Sarah asked.

Mae looked over at Job, then back at Sarah. "He seems to imply that we're all a bunch of miserable sinners," she said. "At least that's what I got from it."

"Do you agree with him?" Job asked.

Mae let out a long sigh. "Well, I do believe there are a lot of bad people in this world, but I know there are a lot of good people as well."

"How are good people different from bad people?" Job asked.

"Well," Mae continue. "Bad people are the ones who lie and cheat and steal, but good people are the ones who are generous and kind-hearted - like you and Sarah."

Job smiled. "Well, I appreciate the compliment, Mae, but according to the Bible I'm actually not a good person. The Bible says in the book of Romans that *all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*. The Bible tells us that there is no one who is without sin."

"But doesn't the Bible talk about people doing good deeds?" Mae asked.

"Yes, there are certainly examples of people doing good deeds in the Bible, and even people in the world around us," Job agreed. "But when we examine our good deeds in the light of God's laws, and the justice that is demanded from breaking His laws, our good deeds will be seen as meaningless when we stand before Him on the day of judgment."

"What laws are you're talking about?" Mae asked.

"I'm sure you've heard of *The Ten Commandments*," Job said. "According to God's law we shouldn't lie, we shouldn't steal, we shouldn't covet . . . as a matter of fact, Jesus said that if we break just one of these laws we are guilty of breaking them all."

"That's why we need a saviour, Mae." Sarah added.

"A saviour from what?" Mae asked. "I thought God was all-loving?"

"Well," Job continued. "It is true that God is loving, but He's also a righteous God who must punish sin wherever it is found. The Gospel of John makes it clear that if we die in our sins without trusting in the work of the Saviour, we are eternally lost. I realize that this might sound unreasonable to some, but if we keep in mind that we are not committing these sins against another human, but against a holy and just God, then it becomes a lot more reasonable."

"Couldn't God just forgive us?" Mae asked. "Why does he have to punish people?"

Job thought for a moment before continuing. "There are many people in the world who simply can't understand how a loving and just God could send someone to Hell because they may have told a lie at one point in their life," He explained. "But the real question you should be asking yourself is 'how could a loving and just God allow law breakers to go unpunished?' How could God let a thief, or a murderer get away with their crimes? That doesn't sound *just* to me."

Mae stared awkwardly at her sister. "What does this mean for me?"

"Think of it as a modern-day court of law," Job suggested. "We've all been found guilty of committing crimes against God, but Jesus Christ came into our world in order to pay the *fine* for the crimes we've committed. The moment a person trusts in *His* sacrifice, their sins are forgiven."

Mae sat silently for a moment. "I'm still not all that convinced that I'm such a bad person." She said. "With the exception of telling a few white lies in the past and taking a few dollars from my mother's purse when I was young, I still believe that I'm a pretty good person."

"I'm sure that compared to many other people in the world you are a good person, Mae," Job agreed. "But what's truly important is whether or not you are a good person according to God's standards, not the standards of the world. The Bible says that lying lips are an abomination to God, and that no thieves or liars will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. These may seem like

minor infractions to us, but they're serious sins to God."

"If telling a few white lies is the worst thing that you've ever done, Mae," Sarah said with a smile. "Then I must really be a horrible person by comparison."

Mae looked at her younger sister and smiled. "I have noticed quite a positive change in you this past week, Sarah," she said, her eyes welling-up. "I can't speak for my own experience, but maybe there really is something to this new found faith of yours."

Sarah reached out and took her sister's hand. "There is something to it, Mae, and even though I still have a lot to learn, I've come to realize that I would be lost without God."

As Mae drew out a tissue from her pocket to wipe her eyes, Job leaned forward and placed a reassuring hand on her shoulder. "Mae, I realize that this might sound like a cliché, but would you like to know how to get right with God?"

Mae nodded her head and smiled. "I think so," she said hesitantly.

"Well," Job continued. "When Paul was put in prison for his faith, one of the jailers asked him what he must do to be saved. Paul responded by saying; *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.”* It's only through faith in the perfect life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that our sins can be forgiven." Job looked over at Mae. "Do you understand?"

"I think I do," she answered.

Job searched the young woman's face trying to determine what to say next.

Sarah finally broke the silence. "Are you thinking about Alex?"

Mae nodded. "I can't help wondering where he is right now."

Job smiled. "Those are matters that we have to leave in God's hands, Mae," he said reassuringly. "We can't let the decisions of others affect our own eternal destination."

"I don't know," Mae said. "I'm still not sure what to believe."

Sarah reached over and put her hand on Mae's arm. "Mae, you shouldn't put off a decision as important as this one. No one knows what tomorrow will bring."

Mae slumped even further into her chair, bringing her hands up to her face. "I'm sorry, Sarah, I just really need some time to think about all of this."

Job got to his feet. "That's alright, Mae. We'll leave it with you." He looked over at Sarah. "Sarah, why don't you come out into the hall with me for a minute."

Sarah stood up and followed Job into the corridor.

"We'll be back in a few minutes, Mae," Job said before stepping out of the room.

When Job turned to Sarah he could see that she was shaking her head in frustration. "Why is she so hesitant to believe, Doctor Anderson?"

"Well, Sarah," Job continued. "Everyone is different when it comes to responding to the message of salvation. Some people, when they hear that they have sinned against God are immediately offended because of their pride. Others realize they are sinners and simply aren't willing to place their trust in Jesus Christ. Still others hear the gospel message but need a little time for it to digest." He smiled, looking down at her. "But you, Sarah, are a prime example of someone who heard the gospel and immediately trusted in its message."

Sarah smiled.

"Not everyone can be as humble as you were when you were told that you're a sinner." Job added. "It's a difficult thing for some people to accept."

"Thanks, Doctor Anderson, I just hope that Mae comes to the same conclusion."

Chapter Twelve

The late morning sun filtered in through the narrow windows high above the lobby doors as Job made his way down to the conference room. He was passing by the nurses' station, deep in thought, when Margaret's voice broke into his reverie.

"Doctor Anderson, could I speak with you for a moment?"

Job brought his eyes up from the sheet of paper he'd been reading and walked over to where Margaret was standing. "Yes, Margaret. What can I do for you?"

"I wanted to talk to you about our new intern, Julie."

Job's eyebrows raised. "Is there trouble in paradise?" he asked. "Hasn't she been replenishing the coffee pot after taking the last cup?"

Margaret placed one hand firmly on her hip. "Oh be serious, doctor," she said, suppressing a smile. "I was just wondering if I could ask you for a bit of advice."

"How can I help?" Job asked.

"Well," Margaret continued, "I think Julie's been having some difficulty coping with her responsibilities here, so I was hoping there was a way to make it easier for her to adjust."

"I see." Job said thoughtfully. "What seems to be the problem?"

"I think she's having a bit of trouble dealing with the different personalities around here." Margaret said with a smile. "If you know what I mean."

Job turned and glanced into the common room. Across from them one of the male residents was seated in the corner leaning over an end table and having what appeared to be an animated conversation with the small table-lamp. "I'm not sure what you mean by 'different

personalities'," he said with a grin. "I talk to table-lamps all the time."

Margaret rolled her eyes. "You're one of the personalities I'm talking about!"

"I'm just trying my best to lighten the mood around here," Job said with a laugh. "But in all seriousness, what do you think of the idea of asking Julie to join us in our next group therapy session, that way she can get to know some of the residents a little better?"

"I was thinking more along the line of fitting all of our more troubled residents with straight jackets," Margaret said with a smile.

"Wait a minute," Job said. "Now you're the one being cynical!"

"You're a terrible influence, Doctor, but I do believe your idea could work."

"I think it might help Julie to see that our residents are real people with their own strengths and abilities, and it might also show her how emotionally vulnerable each individual can be in their own way. I think it's important for Julie to recognize that."

"I agree." Margaret said. "When's your next group session?"

Job was about to answer when a sudden voice from behind him interrupted their conversation. "Are you coming to the meeting, Job?"

Job turned to see Ed Burrows.

He gave Ed a quick wave. "I'll be right there." He turned back to Margaret.

"I was planning on having our next group session in a few days, but I don't mind moving it up to tomorrow if that works better for Julie."

Margaret checked a clipboard lying on the counter. "That sounds good."

Job nodded. "Alright then, I'll stop by tomorrow morning and pick her up first thing."

With that he hurried down the corridor to catch up with Ed who was waiting for him at the foot

of the staircase leading to the second floor.

Ed gave his friend a look. "How are you doing this morning?"

"Good," Job said, eyeing Ed quizzically. "Why? Is my day about to get worse?"

"You might say that," Ed replied, raising his eyebrows. "Remember the discussion you had with Doctor Moore during your meeting in the dining room?"

Job stopped and glanced quickly around them. "Of course."

"Well," Ed continued, "It looks like he decided to bring in a mediator after all."

"Is that right?" Job asked, scratching his chin thoughtfully. "I guess that'll save me the trouble of requesting a mediator myself. But this also means that I'll have to double my efforts in order to find out what's really going on around here."

"What are you planning to do?" Ed asked.

"I'm not sure." Job hesitated. "Can I count on you for a little assistance?"

"Of course!" Ed replied. "What kind of help are you talking about?"

"Unfortunately most of my concerns are based primarily on the recent track records of some of the residences. What I really need is some concrete evidence on the potential side effects from taking these new drugs." Job said with a smile. "That's where you come in."

Ed paused, seeming deep in thought. "I already gave you information regarding certain questionable business practices from Ellis Pharmaceuticals, what else do you need?"

"I appreciate the information you've already given me, Ed, but I feel like I might need more evidence about what's happening on our end. I think I'm going to have to hit this mediator hard with the facts. I hate to keep asking this, but are you able to dig any deeper for me?"

"I'll see what I can do," Ed agreed reluctantly.

“Thanks, Ed.” Job patted his friend encouragingly on the shoulder, then led the way up the stairs and into the conference room.

The first person Job noticed was the mediator, sitting at the far end of the conference table next to Doctor Moore. He was a man of about sixty, thin-framed to the point of emaciation, hollowed-cheeks with a pastiness to his complexion that Job found slightly disturbing. He seemed to give the impression that he was the kind of person who was all business, and would rather be dealing with the affairs of the boardroom than making new friends.

Job nodded to the three men around the table and took his seat next to Ed. John Moore and Roger Gardner looked to be in somewhat of an animated conversation, when the mediator suddenly rapped his knuckles loudly on the table and leaned forward. "Gentlemen, can we get this meeting started? I have a very busy schedule today."

Doctor Moore immediately straightened in his chair, looking somewhat flustered. "Yes. Excuse me." He glanced anxiously around the table. "I'd first like to introduce our guest. This is Doctor Jim Borman, the Board-appointed mediator that I requested to join us. Jim, these are the other full-time physicians we have on staff: Roger Gardner, Job Anderson, and Edwin Burrows. I made a request to have a Board-appointed mediator join us as a result of the accusations made by certain members of the staff. Jim is here to investigate the concerns presented to me by our staff pertaining to the issue of medications." With that he looked pointedly at Job.

Roger leaned forward. "If you ask me it's a waste of time. This is a facility for mental health and these medications are obviously justified by the residents' needs."

Roger had no sooner gotten the words out of his mouth when Jim Borman spoke up. "Excuse me, Doctor Gardner. I would ask that you do not make light of this situation. We take

matters such as these very seriously. The simple fact that these individuals are in a mental health facility does not give anyone the right to prescribe them any medication they wish. We must keep in mind that this hospital is no different than any other. These people should be treated with the same dignity and respect that we would wish for ourselves!"

Roger bristled at the words of the mediator. "With all due respect, sir, we wouldn't be prescribing medications for residents if we didn't feel they would benefit from them."

"Well," Jim answered. "I guess that's what I'm here to find out, isn't it?"

"It is," Job agreed. "And we're glad to have you here with us. At the risk of sounding over-eager, what are the next steps in this process?"

"I think it would be best to have any concerned parties demonstrate that there is indeed sufficient evidence that would indicate that there's a potential problem with over-medication," Jim suggested. "If there's such evidence, then I will bring it to the Board's attention."

"What if you find that over-medication is in fact a problem?" Doctor Moore asked.

"All of my findings will depend heavily on the circumstances," Jim replied. "Naturally there's plenty of room for error, but in past cases, I've often found that there's a wide range of reasons for concerns such as this arising. The first step would be documenting each individual medication used in this facility, and the reasons why they've been prescribed to each resident. If these findings indicate that there are certain residents who are being over-medicated, or are being prescribed an inappropriate dosage, our primary concern is making sure that we wean the residents off these medications slowly, so their health isn't put at further risk."

"What involvement will you have on our day-to-day operations?" Ed asked.

"I'm going to start by doing a detailed investigation into the history of each resident. This

is a kind of preliminary indicator to determine whether the residents were making any substantial improvement before the complaints were made. Once their history has been determined I will be doing a detailed review of the prescribed medications as previously mentioned. If there are indications of inappropriate prescriptions, further investigations will follow."

Job straightened up his seat, getting the attention of the rest of the doctors sitting around the table. "I can tell you right now, Doctor Borman, that many of our residents were making a substantial amount of progress before these new medications were prescribed, and as a result I've been finding it much more difficult to provide them with counselling on a one-to-one basis."

"In what way are you experiencing these difficulties?" Jim asked.

"Well," Job continued, "Lately I have noticed a sharp decline in several of the residents social behaviours. I've also noticed that during a number of the residents' regularly scheduled sessions, I'm getting a lot more one worded answers to questions that were once effective in opening up a dialogue that would lead to a more productive conversation."

"Perhaps you're just losing your touch," Roger said sarcastically.

Job looked up to see Doctor Moore giving Roger a knowing grin.

"Actually," Ed interjected, "I noticed the same behaviour with my patients as well."

"Alright," Doctor Moore said. "How long can we expect this investigation to last?"

"Rest assured, gentlemen, that I will follow every established protocol to the letter. I'll make sure that I bring each of you up to speed on my progress throughout the week. You can expect the investigation to take as long as is required, and not a day less."

"Where do we go from here, then?" Doctor Moore asked.

"Feel free to carry on with business as usual." Doctor Borman replied. "I'll get to know

each of the residents and staff members during my first few days. This includes observing your group sessions, as well as taking part in any routine activities with the residents. My final step will be questioning each doctor to establish treatment methods and the rationale for the treatment prescribed. This, of course, would include medications and any therapeutic interventions. And from this point on, all changes in medications should be run by me first."

Job watched Doctor Moore stir uneasily in his seat. "If there's anything you need, sir, just let me know," Doctor Moore said. "This meeting is adjourned."

Chapter Thirteen

Job pushed open the door and struggled into the main foyer balancing two coffee trays in his hands. Margaret looked up from her desk as he approached.

"Do you need a hand?" she asked.

"No, I think I have it," Job replied unconvincingly.

"Just try to be careful," Margaret insisted. "I don't have time to mop up these floors if you drop one of those trays."

Job set the drinks on the counter and placed one of the coffees in front of Margaret. "The caffeine from this coffee should help you clean up the mess if I do drop a tray."

Margaret scowled good-naturedly at him. "This might give me more energy, but I still won't clean up the mess." She said with a smile. "Thanks for the coffee all the same."

"I have one for Julie, too," Job added. "Is she ready for our session?"

Margaret looked over her shoulder into the little office behind her. "I think she should be ready in a minute. She's just on the phone with her babysitter right now."

"She looks too old to need a babysitter," Job smiled playfully at Margaret as he inched his way towards Julie, attempting to eavesdrop on her phone conversation.

"Listen," Julie was saying. "You've got to find a way to get that pistachio out of Eli's nose. Have you tried using a small pair of tweezers?"

There was a pause as Margaret looked up at Job and raised her eyebrows. "The joys of motherhood," she said. "Makes me glad my kids are all out of the house."

Job laughed, turning his attention once again to Julie. "Perhaps the nanny should try using

a dust-buster to get it out,” he suggested. “That always worked on my little sister.”

Margaret smiled as she watched Julie hang up the phone and join them.

"I'm sorry to keep you waiting, Doctor Anderson," she said. "I was just trying to straighten out a small situation at home with our babysitter."

"So I heard," Job said with a grin. "Not that I was eavesdropping."

“A likely story!” Margaret said with a chuckle. "Julie, you can run off to your meeting with Doctor Anderson now. I'll man the fort while you're away."

Job smiled, handing Julie a cup of coffee. "This will help ease the pain of our session."

"Thank you," Julie said, taking the cup.

"Don't thank him until you've tasted it," Margaret suggested. "The last time I let Doctor Anderson buy me a coffee I ended up with latte laced with hot sauce."

"Wait a minute,” Job objected. “I put a lot of thought into that drink. That was one of my specialties – a chilli-spiced mocha. I thought it would remind you of home, back in Jamaica."

Margaret rolled her eyes. “I'm not from Jamaica, Doctor. I'm from Barbados."

“Oh,” Job said. “Then who's from Jamaica?”

Margaret shook her head. “Jamaicans, I presume.”

Job laughed as he led Julie down the hallway towards the conference room. When he and Julie arrived several of the residents were already seated in a circle. Doctor Borman was sitting by himself in a corner of the room with a large notepad in hand.

"Good afternoon, everyone," Job said in a loud voice.

Several of the residents looked up and smiled as Job and Julie entered the room. Job immediately went among the residents, handing each of them a drink, while cautiously balancing

the trays. "Mae, here's your hot chocolate with whipped cream. For Phil, a non-fat latte. Karen, a tea with milk on the side. And William, here's your cappuccino . . ."

"Is it decaf?" William asked.

"I certainly hope so," Job said with a smile. "And for you, Mel, a regular black coffee." He then walked over to where Jim Borman was seated. "Good morning Jim. I wasn't sure which kind of drink you would like, so I just got you a regular coffee." He handed his guest the drink then reached into his pocket for packets of sugar and cream.

"Thank you very much," Jim said. "Just pretend I'm not here, Doctor Anderson. My purpose is not to join in on the conversation, I'm simply here as an observer."

"That's fine with me," Job said. "Just let me know if you have any questions."

Once again Job crossed the room to a chair near the front and took his seat. "So how's everyone feeling today?" he asked with a broad smile.

There were a few indistinguishable replies as the residents turned towards him.

"Come on now, people. Where are all those energetic responses that I usually get during our sessions? Especially from you, William. Are you feeling alright?"

"I don't think I have the energy this morning, Doc," William said apologetically.

"That's okay," Job said. "How about we just get started." He glanced down at the notepad in his hand. "First of all I'd like to welcome a couple of guests we have joining us this morning." He turned his attention towards Julie who was sitting to his immediate right. "I think you all know our student nurse, Julie. She's just here to get to know all of you a little better." He then pointed to the man seated in a corner of the room. "And we're also pleased to welcome Doctor Borman to our group. He's here to make a few observations during our meeting in order to

ensure that everything we are doing is up to the standards that a licensed facility requires."

Jim nodded. "Just continue your meeting as if I wasn't here."

Job smiled and turned back to the residents gathered around him. "Why don't we start off this morning's session by going clockwise around the circle and briefly explaining why each of us is here, and what kind of struggles you're currently facing. Keep in mind that we all go through different hardships during our lives, so we want to make sure that we're all sensitive to the needs and feelings of every member of the group."

He turned to Mae. "Why don't we start with you, Mae? Could you tell us a little bit about yourself, and what brought you to the residence?"

"Well," Mae said, taking in a deep breath. "I grew up in a small town not far from here where my father was a successful businessman and my mother stayed at home to raise the family. I guess I had a fairly normal childhood. I have a younger sister, and I was married to a wonderful man named Alex." Mae's voice choked-up.

"It's alright, Mae," Job said warmly. He turned to the others sitting around the circle. "For those of you who don't already know, Mae lost her husband in an accident several months ago, which is part of the reason why she needs our support."

Karen, who was sitting next to Mae, reached out and put her hand on Mae's shoulder. "It's okay, dear. You know that many of us have gone through similar experiences."

"That's true, Karen." Job said. "As a matter of fact, why don't you tell us a little bit about *your own* background, and why you're here with us?"

Karen leaned forward, with both hands wrapped firmly around her cup of tea. "I lost my own husband after twenty five long years of marriage," she said, lowering her head. "He was

very abusive towards me throughout our marriage, and in a way his death came as a kind of a relief, but it was still one of the hardest things that I've ever gone through."

"What else can you tell us about yourself, Karen?" Job asked.

Karen paused for a moment and glanced around the small group of people. "Well, after raising my three children and seeing them make something of themselves in the world, my family realized that I just wasn't myself anymore. I talked it over with my children, and they thought it would be best for me to come and live here for a while."

Job smiled supportively. "We're thrilled to have you with us, Karen. Whatever you've gone through in your past, you can rest assured that you're now a part of our extended family." He looked over at Phil who was sitting on the other side of Karen. "And what about you, Phil? What can you tell us about yourself?"

Phil stirred uneasily in his chair. "Well," He said sheepishly, avoiding eye-contact with the other residents, "I don't have much to say about myself, Doctor Anderson, but I would like to let Mae and Karen know that they can always count on me as a friend."

"Thanks, Phil." Job said with a smile. "I'm sure Mae and Karen really appreciate your support." Job turned to William. "First Class Lieutenant Colonel William James! What can you tell us about the life and mystery of your unforgettable past?"

William got to his feet and thrust out his chest. "William James, my dear friends, is a man of adventure. A pioneer, a raconteur, a trail blazer, and the true inspiration for the best selling novel by Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*."

"That book was written long before you were born!" Mel shouted angrily.

William thrust one hand into the lapel of his sports jacket and glanced disdainfully down

at the other man. "That's because Mark Twain had a vision of my life, and was so enthralled by it's glory that he simply had to write it down for future generations to enjoy."

"Thank you, William," Job said with a laugh. "You can sit down now, I think we all have a pretty good idea of why you're here."

Job heard Jim give a soft chuckle from his seat in the corner of the room.

"You really are an inspiration to us all, William," Job added. He then turned to the last of the residents. "Mel. Can you tell us a little bit about yourself?"

"What's there to tell?" Mel said with a loud grunt. "I emigrated here from Russia with my wife Nadia. After my wife died and my kids grew up they said I was angry all the time, so they sent me to this place ... but what do they know!"

Julie moved to the edge of her chair, her eyes fixed on Mel. "I hope we can be a new family to you, Mel," she said with a smile. "I realize that we can never replace your real family, but at least we can be here to support you in your new life with us."

"Anger can be a hard thing to overcome," Job said. "But we should always be open to the idea of allowing others the privilege of helping us cope with our grief."

"I don't need help from anyone," Mel said angrily.

Job nodded. "Alright, Mel." He turned to Julie. "Julie, how about telling us a little bit about yourself for the benefit of those who don't know your background."

Julie smiled nervously. "All right. I've been married for three years to a wonderful man named Martin and have a two year old baby boy name Elijah, who has been teaching me the meaning of patience. I'm also in the last year of my nursing program at the local university." She hesitated for a moment. "Entering the nursing profession has proven to be much more of a

challenge than I thought, but I'm learning to make the best of it. As a matter of fact I've always dreamt of doing something completely different with my life."

"What's that?" Mae asked curiously.

"Well, I've always wanted to be a full-time mom, but Martin and I have never been able to afford to live off a single income," Julie said. "Children grow up so quickly, and when I'm at work I feel like I'm missing out on watching my little boy grow up."

"I can imagine how much you must miss your son," Mae said sympathetically. "Alex and I wanted to have children, but we never had the chance."

Julie leaned forward in her chair, "If you're interested, Mae, I used to be a volunteer over at the local chapter of the Big Sisters Society. Many of the girls in that program have gone through very hard times, and have absolutely no one to love and care for them. Perhaps you and these girls would be a wonderful support for one another. I'm sure they'd love to meet you."

Mae sat in silence for a moment as she considered Julie's words.

"Is there anything else you would like to share, Julie?" Job asked.

"I don't think so," Julie said. "But if anyone would like to talk with me privately, you can always come to see me at the front desk behind the nurses' station."

"Thank you, Julie," Job said. "We appreciate you joining us today, and sharing with in group session." He paused and glanced around the circle of faces. "Well, I think that should do it for today, folks, unless anyone else has something new to share. I appreciate you all coming in today to help Julie get to know us all a little better."

Mae turned in her chair to face Job. "Wait a minute," she said abruptly. "You still haven't told us what brought you here, Doctor Anderson."

Job straightened in his chair and smiled nervously. "That's fair enough," he said. "For the sake of time, I'll try to sum up my life in as few words as possible."

He turned in Mae's direction. "Much like yourself, Mae, I also believe that I had a reasonably normal childhood. I grew up with both of my parents and a younger sister. Unfortunately our family lost my sister when I finishing my first year of college."

"Were you studying to be a counsellor then?" Julie asked.

"No, actually I was studying to become an archaeologist. It wasn't until I saw what an impact my sister's death had on our family that I decided to go into counselling."

"So you've had tragedy in your life as well," Karen said in surprise.

"I did," Job replied. "I believe that it's important for us we learn whatever we can from personal tragedies in our past. Often times these experiences can help us to grow in our lives and even help support others who are going through similar circumstances."

"We're here for you, too, Doc," William assured him.

Job smiled. "Thanks, William. I appreciate that." He looked around the room at the faces surrounding him. "Well, I hope I'll see you all again next week."

"What about *Movie Night*?" Phil interrupted.

"Oh right," Job said. "Phil, why don't you give us the details?"

Phil got to his feet, smiling broadly. "Barring any objections, *The Towering Inferno* starring Steve McQueen and Paul Newman, will be shown in the main auditorium at 6:00 P.M. this coming Thursday. I hope you'll all be there."

"Will there be any snacks?" William asked eagerly.

Phil nodded his head. "Yes. There will be popcorn and soft drinks available for \$1 each."

The donations raised will go to the resident social fund."

"That sounds great, Phil," Job said. "I think it's safe to say that we will all be looking forward to watching *The Towering Inferno* this coming Thursday. He glanced over at Jim Borman. "Is there anything you'd like to add before we finish, Doctor Borman?"

Jim looked up from his notes and shook his head. "I don't think so. I just wanted to thank you all for allowing me the chance to be with you here today."

"Okay then," Job said. "I'll see you all the same time next week."

Chapter Fourteen

Job got to his feet and watched as the participants from his group session made their way out into the hall. He noticed Mae hesitate slightly as she was leaving.

"Could you stay behind with me for a minute, Mae?" Job asked.

She turned and smiled up at him. "Sure."

As the final residents exited, Job led Mae back over to a chair on the opposite side of the room and sat down across from her.

"If I am not mistaken, Mae, it looked like you were a little more outgoing during today's session," he said with an enthusiastic smile.

Mae lowered her head timidly. "Thanks," she replied. "Maybe it's because I haven't bothered to take my new medication this morning."

"Is that right?" Job said, trying to keep the surprise from showing on his face. "Well, you should know that I normally wouldn't advise you to go against your doctor's orders, Mae, but in this case I'll support your decision. Just be sure to mention this to Doctor Moore."

"I will," Mae replied.

Job suddenly got to his feet. "Can you wait here for a minute, Mae?" he asked. "I have to get something. I'll be right back." With that he hurried over to the nurses' station, ducked behind the desk and returned with a large gift bag.

Mae's eyes lit up with curiosity as Job approached her.

"What's this?" she asked.

Job returned to the seat and handed her the gift bag. "It's nothing big," he insisted. "It's

just something that I saw in a store window and thought it would be perfect for you."

Mae dipped her hand into the bag and pulled out a large box wrapped in brown paper. She looked curiously over at Job.

"Go ahead, Mae. Open it," Job said.

Mae gave an excited squeal as she ripped open the package, revealing a small box with a colourful picture on the front. "A radio?" she asked in surprise.

"It's much more than a radio," Job said. "Remember when we walked out to the gazebo for our session last week, and we stopped by the water fountain?"

Mae nodded. "Of course."

"I remember you telling me how peaceful it was to listen to the sound of running water. This radio has five different settings, each one featuring a different sound from nature, including the ocean, a babbling brook and a waterfall. The best part of all is that it also comes with one hundred pre-programmed classical songs - oh, I mean compositions." He grinned.

Mae opened the box and removed the radio, holding it tightly with both hands. "Thank you, Doctor Anderson" she said admiring her gift. "This means a lot to me."

"Don't mention it, Mae," he said. "I'm here to help you in any way that I can. Which brings me to the main reason why I asked you to stay behind. I can't help feeling as if there's something you want to tell me," he said. "Am I wrong, or is there something on your mind?"

Mae looked up at Job, the surprise showing on her face. After a brief moment she looked back down at the radio, gripping it tightly in her hands. When she spoke her voice was barely audible. "I've never told this to anyone before, but after I lost Alex in the accident, I got some unexpected news," she said, bringing her hand up to her face and dabbing at her eyes. "One week

after his funeral I found out that I was six weeks pregnant."

Job could feel his eyes widening as he absorbed the information. He sat down hard on a chair next to Mae, placing his elbows on his knees.

"Did you lose the baby, Mae?" He asked quietly.

Mae brought both hands up to her face, leaning forward. "Yes," she said, beginning to sob uncontrollably. "I don't understand why God couldn't let me keep the baby."

Job leaned forward, taking Mae's hand. "I'm so sorry for your loss, Mae."

Mae raised her head slowly, seeming almost ashamed of showing her emotions. "You're the first person who knows about this. Not even my family knows that I was expecting."

"Why did you decide not to tell them, Mae?" Job asked.

"I don't know," she said softly. "I guess I was just embarrassed,"

"Embarrassed?" Job echoed. "You have nothing to feel embarrassed about, Mae. What happened to you and your child was beyond your control."

"I know," she said. "It's just hard to talk about this sort of thing with my parents."

"I understand, Mae," Job said sympathetically. "But I think it's important for you to share this information with your family. It's not good to keep such traumatic experiences to yourself, and remember, Mae, it's important to have the support of your family when you need it most."

"To be honest, Doctor Anderson, my family has never really been that close, but lately I have noticed a change in their attitude - especially Sarah."

"You're lucky to have a family that cares for you." Job said sympathetically.

"I think I'm starting to realize that," Mae said. "And I just wanted to thank you for everything that you've done for Sarah. She's really changed a lot during this past week. I have a

feeling you played a big part in making that happen."

"Well, I appreciate that, Mae," Job said. "But all I did was share my own faith and experiences with her. God's the one who does the transformation." He paused, eyeing the young woman across from him. "Have you given any more thought to our last discussion?"

"Well," she said slowly. "I haven't really had the chance to think it through. At the moment I'm still trying to clear my head. There's too much to think about right now."

"What about your future plans?" Job asked. "Keeping in mind that there's no rush, have you considered what you'd like to do, when you are ready to leave the facility?"

"I haven't had a chance to think that far ahead." She replied.

"What about Julie's suggestion of volunteering with Big Sisters?"

Mae smiled. "Actually I think it might be a great experience to get to know some of those girls, but I'm not sure if I'm ready for that much responsibility."

"Would you like to talk to Julie about it some more?"

"I don't know." Mae replied hesitantly. "Let's see what happens."

Job sat back in his chair and folded his arms across his chest. "You know Mae, I've been thinking a lot about what you've been through and I was wondering if you'd mind if I shared something with you?" He paused waiting for a response before continuing. "I understand how hard it is for you to get over the loss of your husband, and even though you will always have that sadness in your heart from losing Alex and the baby, it's important for us to recognize when the time is right to move on with our lives. There's a passage in the Bible, written by King Solomon that speaks to this very issue." Job pulled a small Bible from his pocket and flipped it open.

Mae smiled. "Boy, you sure do come prepared, don't you?"

Job laughed awkwardly. "Well, you never know when The Good Book might come in handy. This thing has helped me on more than one occasion." He looked down at the text. "Here are the verses that I was talking about, taken from the book of Ecclesiastes. *To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.*

When Job finished reading he looked thoughtfully over at Mae. "I realize how difficult it can be to connect your own thoughts, feelings, and emotions with these words," Job said. "But I think what the writer was hoping to convey is the understanding that there will always be difficult times in our lives. We will always go through various ups and downs, but it's important for us to remember that God will always be there for us throughout these difficult times. We may not always think that He's there for us when we're suffering through hardships, but God has given us many wonderful promises in his Word. For instance a verse from the book of Philippians reads, *Fret not about anything, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

"I know it can be hard," Job said closing his Bible. "But I think the first step in making a lasting recovery is by allowing yourself the ability to move forward, towards *a time of peace.*"

"That's easier said than done," Mae said, letting out a deep sigh and sinking back into her chair. "Ever since I lost Alex, every morning feels like I'm waking up from a bad dream. Even though Alex and I were only married for a short time, the moments we spent together are some of the most memorable of my life. There were so many things that we wanted to do with our lives, and so many plans we had made together. . ." she paused.

"What kind of plans?" Job asked. "If you don't mind me asking."

"Well," Mae continued. "Aside from having children, we really wanted to travel together. We talked a lot about going to Africa, to help dig wells in rural communities."

"That sounds like a very courageous thing to do," Job said.

Mae smiled. "Alex was like that. He always worked so hard at helping others. Even when we were struggling financially, he was too proud to accept any help from my parents. Even if it meant that he had to work a few extra shifts to make up the difference."

"It sounds like he was a very honourable man." Job said with a smile.

"He was," Mae replied. "He sacrificed everything he had to help give us a better life - even sacrificing his own life to save mine."

"Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends."

Mae looked up at Job and gave him a half-smile. "The Bible really does have something to say on every subject, doesn't it?"

Job grinned. "I didn't think you'd recognize that quote as being from the Bible. I was sure that I could get away with slipping that one past you!"

"Oh I think I can spot a trend when I see one," she said.

Job laughed. "I admit that I probably use more Bible verses in an average conversation

than most people do. Probably more than most Pastors on any given Sunday."

"I think I'm starting to see the value of it," Mae agreed.

"Well, I'm glad you think so, Mae. Not everyone can appreciate the value of counselling from a Biblical perspective. It's almost become a lost art."

"It is a rather unusual perspective to find in today's so called *modern world*," Mae said. "But it's comforting to see someone who's able to maintain their faith in this day and age. It's not often that you find a religion in our world that's able to stand the test of time."

"That's true enough." Job said, pausing for a moment. "It's actually strange when you think about it, but the majority of modern statistics show that a large percentage of the population seems to lose their faith when they enter into college, but that's when I found mine."

"You weren't always religious?" Mae asked.

Job shook his head. "No, not at all. In fact it wasn't until my second year of college that I found myself being challenged by one of my professors. Up to that point I had always believed that religion was only a crutch for weak-minded people. This professor, however, appeared to be someone who had a great deal of knowledge and who had, in fact, thought things through. He not only believed in God but lived out his life in a way that supported his beliefs. It was at that time that I thought the church was full of nothing but sinners and hypocrites, but then I came to understand the fact that we are *all sinners* and the only difference between a believer and a non-believer is the fact that a believer is trusting in a promise that their sins have been forgiven."

Mae nodded in agreement. "I guess the old saying *don't judge a book by its cover* holds true in your case. Although it's often easier to judge another person's actions than it is to judge your own. It's not always easy to look at yourself in the mirror with honesty."

"It sure isn't," Job agreed. "But we can't let other people get in the way of our own understanding of who we are, and how we understand truth. If we do that, then we're simply allowing our family and friends to determine what we hold to be true."

Mae nodded her head. "I appreciate the advise, Doctor Anderson."

"It's my pleasure, Mae," Job said, helping her to her feet. "I want you to know that I'll always be here for you when you need someone to talk to, and most especially, I'll be here for you when you're ready to make the next step on your life's journey."

Chapter Fifteen

Job picked up the handful of files from his desk and carried them across the room to his filing cabinet. He checked the label on the first one, then knelt by the bottom drawer and pulled it open. He flipped through the tightly packed files, then slipped the one from his hand into place. At that moment the telephone on his desk rang.

He returned to his desk, dropped into his chair and picked up the receiver. "This had better be worth it," he mumbled to himself. "Good morning, Doctor Anderson speaking."

"Hi Job, it's Ed."

"Oh, good morning Ed," Job replied. "How's everything going?"

"Both good and bad," Ed replied grimly. "Depending on who you are."

"What do you mean?" Job asked.

"I spoke to my friend from Ellis Pharmaceuticals this morning," Ed responded. "My contact actually left the company earlier this month to work for another firm, so he was quite willing to share all of his previous employer's dirty little secrets with me."

"Is that right?" Job said. "That sounds promising."

"I thought so too. Do you have time for a quick meeting?" Ed asked.

"I'll be right there." Job hung up the phone and hurried out the door. Stepping into the hall he almost collided with Mae, who had been standing outside his office door.

"Oh, you scared me Doctor Anderson," she said in surprise. "I was actually just stopping by to ask if you were going to join us for our movie night tomorrow."

"I wouldn't miss it," Job said with a smile. "Which movie was playing again?"

"I think it's an old classic about an office building that catches on fire."

"Oh, that's right. *The Towering Inferno*."

"Yes." Mae said. "That's the one. Have you seen it before?"

"I sure have," Job said. "Several times. It's actually one of my favourites. You can't go wrong with a classic Steve McQueen flick."

Mae sighed. "You men are all alike. Alex also loved to watch Steve McQueen movies. Not to mention Clint Eastwood and Paul Newman."

"Eastwood and Newman," Job said with a grin. "Alex really did have good taste."

"Oh brother," Mae said with a smile.

"All right. All right." Job said. "I'll see you tomorrow evening at the movies." He started off down the hall, then turned back in Mae's direction. "Don't forget the popcorn."

"I won't," she said.

He walked the few remaining steps down the hallway leading to Ed's office. The door was open several inches so Job rapped lightly and peered inside. "Howdy, Ed."

Ed was seated at his desk, head bowed over a large manila file in his hands. He quickly glanced up and gave Job a friendly wave. "Job, come on in and shut the door."

Job stepped inside and closed the door behind him. "What do you have for me, Ed?" He crossed the room and dropped into a large chair in front of Ed's desk.

Ed pulled a sheet of paper from the manila folder he was holding and handed it to Job. "What does this look like to you?" He asked mysteriously.

"Another bombshell, I hope." Job said as he glanced carefully at the paper, reading it over several times. "It looks to me like a copy of a cheque from Ellis Pharmaceuticals."

Ed smiled. "But notice who it's made out to."

Job drew the sheet of paper even closer. "Hmm," he said, looking back up at his friend. "Doctor John Moore. But what is this supposed to mean? We get refund cheques all the time, don't we? How is this cheque any different from the others?"

"We do get refund cheques from Ellis," Ed agreed. "But take a look at this next page and tell me what you think." He handed Job another sheet of paper.

"It looks like the same cheque," Job said. "Only a different amount."

"Not quite," Ed interrupted. "Notice who this cheque is made out to."

Job examined the cheque further. "I see what you mean," He said in surprise. "This cheque was made out to the institution."

"I did a little bit of digging and discovered that all of the cheques coming into this facility must be made out to the institution itself. *Emmanuel Psychiatric Hospital*. And we have only two individuals who are authorized to make deposits on behalf of the facility."

"If that's true, then why would this cheque be made out to Doctor Moore?" Job asked. "Unless he's been receiving a kickback of some kind."

"I think you may be on to something," Ed said with a grim smile. "And not only that, I made sure to double check with the accounting department, and they confirmed that there is only one account that Ellis Pharmaceuticals uses to pay their outstanding rebates, and this is not that account. Furthermore my contact at Ellis has made it clear that the cheque made out to Doctor Moore isn't even from a legitimate Ellis account, but is most likely from an executive's private account. Note what's written on the memo line, it says; *Payment for services rendered*."

Job smiled. "Ed, I don't know how you managed to get this, but it looks like you single-

handedly found enough evidence to prove that there's a serious conflict of interest going on here. I just hope this is enough evidence to open the eyes of the Board of Directors."

Ed closed the manila folder, the smile disappearing from his face. "I'm glad to help out, Job. But remember, you didn't get any of this information from me."

Job got to his feet and nodded at his friend. "Thanks again, Ed. I don't know how I can ever repay you for what you've done."

"When you put it that way," Ed said with a grin. "Nothing says *thank you* quite like an extra large mocha with whipped cream. Hold the hot sauce."

Job laughed. "Consider it done."

He turned slowly towards the door and made his exit out into the hallway. Hurrying back down the narrow corridor, Job passed quickly through the common area. Mel was sitting in the far corner of the room, one eye on the television across from him.

"Mel," Job said. "How are you doing this morning?"

"I'm fine." Mel replied abruptly.

"Have you seen Doctor Borman?" Job asked.

Mel glanced up impatiently at Job and scowled. "I don't even know who you're talking about. Leave me alone."

Job carefully studied the older man for a moment before responding. "Come on, Mel. I'm sure you've seen him around the building the last few days. He's about your age, thin, always wears a grey striped sports jacket and red tie . . ."

"No," Mel shouted, his face turning red. "I told you already that I haven't seen him!"

"Alright, Mel. There's no need to raise your voice." With a perplexed look on his face,

Job turned and walked over to the nurses' station.

Margaret was seated behind the desk as Job approached. "Don't antagonize him, Doctor," she said. "Mel has been very touchy these last few days."

"I can see that," Job said. "Maybe I should take a quick look at his chart."

Margaret reached behind her and picked a file folder up from the desk. "I'm already one step ahead of you," she said. "I was just looking it over myself."

"Ah, Margaret, you're beginning to think more like a doctor. Why don't you come with me this morning and help me out on my rounds?"

"I've got enough to do around here babysitting all of these crazy people," Margaret said with a wink. "And I'm not talking about the residents."

"Ouch," Job said with a chuckle. "Present company excluded, I hope."

Margaret smiled. "The jury's still out on that one."

Job tucked the folder tightly under his arm. "Would you mind telling this crazy person where I might be able to find Doctor Borman?"

Margaret pointed down the hallway to her right. "The last time I saw Doctor Borman he was heading towards the dining room."

"Thanks, Margaret," Job said. "I'll be back in a few minutes. In the meantime, would you mind keeping an eye on Mel for me?"

Margaret rolled her eyes. "There's nothing I would love more."

Job made his way down the hallway to the large double doors leading into the dining room. Before entering he glanced through the window and spotted Doctor Borman sitting at a table in a far corner of the room. Job drew in a long breath before pushing open the doors and

crossing the dining area to where the other man was sitting.

"Could I speak with you for a minute, Doctor Borman?" Job asked.

Doctor Borman swallowed a last mouthful of food, pushed back his tray and nodded to Job. "Certainly. I was just finishing up here anyway. Have a seat."

Job pulled out a plastic chair and sat down across from the other man. "How has your investigation been going so far?" he asked.

Jim shrugged. "It's going about as well as can be expected."

Job hesitated, carefully considering his words. "I have some information that might make your job a little easier." He slipped the manila folder across the table.

Jim flipped it open and scanned slowly through the pages inside. After a moment he looked back up at Job. "What's this supposed to mean?"

Job leaned forward and pointed to the first sheet of paper. "This cheque is a copy of one made out to our facility from Ellis Pharmaceuticals for rebates owing as a result of over-payment or expired and unused medications." Job pointed to the next sheet of paper. "The next page shows a copy of another cheque made out by one of the representatives of Ellis Pharmaceuticals, only this cheque is made out to our chief physician, Doctor Moore."

"Is that significant?" Jim interrupted.

"Well," Job continued. "It is the policy of this institution to have every cheque made out to the actual name of the facility in order to avoid fraud, and there are only two individuals in the building who are authorized to cash these cheques."

"I'm guessing Doctor Moore's not one of them," Jim said.

"That's right," Job agreed. "Obviously it would be a conflict of interest for a doctor to be

receiving any form of payment from a drug manufacturer as it could imply that the doctor is receiving a kickback. In addition to that, our accounting department has informed us that Ellis Pharmaceuticals has always used the same bank account when issuing rebate cheques. As you can see, the cheque made out to Doctor Moore has been issued from a separate account."

"So what are you saying?" Jim asked.

Again Job hesitated. "I believe that this cheque could be evidence of a kickback made to Doctor Moore so that he'll continue ordering excessive amounts of medications for our residents. I'd also like to add that many of these medications are experimental in nature, and are backed by insufficient clinical evidence as to their potential side-effects – especially long-term side-effects. The next several pages in this folder bear evidence of this."

Jim stared across the table at Job for a long moment. "Well, you certainly have presented a condemning case against Doctor Moore," he finally said. "You do understand, however, that I have to take the necessary steps to ensure the validity of these accusations, which will mean your involvement in an official inquiry. Are you comfortable with proceeding?"

Job nodded. "Absolutely," he said. "In the meantime I would like to express my own concerns about some of the things I have witnessed in regards to a sudden deterioration in the behavior of several of the residents since my arrival." He opened Mel's folder and scanned through the first few pages before continuing. "This is the file for one of our long-term residents, Mel Chilocolwich. I note here how over the past six months, Mel's medications have increased three fold. And what's even more concerning is the fact that throughout this brief period of time, I have noticed a serious deterioration in Mel's mental faculties."

"How so?" Jim asked.

"When I first arrived at this facility, Mel showed typical signs of someone with mild aggression and moderate anti-social behaviour as a result of post traumatic stress disorder. However, since he was prescribed these new medications, other doctors, including myself, have noticed that his aggression has increased significantly. He's become more prone to violence."

"Maybe it's just his age." Jim replied diplomatically. "It could be that Mel is simply getting older, or perhaps he's developing a form of dementia or Alzheimer's disease."

"I certainly would consider that a possibility for someone who is in their seventies or eighties and who might also be suffering from dementia or Alzheimer's disease," Job said. "But Mel is still in his early sixties. And not only that, I've also noticed similar changes in many of the other residents who have been prescribed the same medication. Many of the residents that I've been counselling over the last few weeks were making very encouraging progress in their overall mental health, but this has all changed as a result of these new medications. This leads me to believe that Mel's deterioration is not merely an isolated incident or one caused by dementia or any other naturally occurring factors." His eyes met those of the man across the table from him. "I hope you understand how serious this situation has become."

Jim nodded. "I am starting to get the idea, Doctor Anderson. Rest assured knowing that I will be conducting a detailed investigation into the information you've given me."

Job got to his feet. "I appreciate your time, Doctor Borman."

Chapter Sixteen

The large double doors to the theatre room were wide open when Job arrived and the overwhelming aroma of fresh popcorn filled the air. He stepped into the faintly-lit foyer and paused for a moment by the entrance while his eyes grew accustomed to the dim light. The sound of classical music could be heard playing softly in the background as he removed his jacket and hung it in the small alcove by the door. Several of the residents were already milling about the room and Karen and Mae were standing behind a large popcorn cart wearing white paper caps.

"Would you like some popcorn, Doctor Anderson?" Karen asked.

Job gave her a big grin as he walked over to the stand. "Naturally, Karen. You can't watch a movie without a fresh bag of popcorn, and this popcorn smells delicious."

She scooped out a large bagful for Job and turned to Mae who was standing next to her filling drinks for the residents.

"As a special treat we have a small selection of Italian sodas," Mae said.

"That sounds intriguing," Job said. "What flavours do you have?"

"We have orange, peach, ginger, lime, blackberry and cherry."

"I haven't had blackberry since I was a kid," Job said. "I'll have that."

Mae squirted a few pumps of the syrup into a small plastic cup, and then carefully mixed in a can of carbonated soda.

Job stuffed a bill into the jar that was on the counter and took the drink from Mae. "Thank you, ladies," he said. "Will you be coming in to watch the movie with us when it starts?"

"We will," Mae said. "Even though the *Towering Inferno* was one of Alex's favourites, I

never actually sat through the whole thing. So I'll be watching it today to make him proud."

Job laughed. "Well then, I guess I'll see you both inside."

He turned from the table to see Margaret standing by the entrance with a scruffy looking man dressed in a loud sports jacket, and a woman wearing a bright yellow scarf.

"Doctor Anderson," Margaret said. "Come over here and introduce yourself!"

Job took a sip of his soda as he joined Margaret by the entrance door.

"I just wanted you to meet our two newest residents," she said turning first to the middle-aged woman standing next to her. "Doctor Anderson, this is Denise Monds."

"Pleased to meet you, Denise," Job said, shaking her hand.

Margaret then turned to the man standing to her right. "And this is Bill McBride."

"We have another Bill?" Job said with a smile. "Well, I don't think that should be too confusing for everyone, since our other resident prefers to be called *William*."

"I know," Bill said with a slight twitch. "I met him already. I don't like him."

"Oh," Job said in surprise. "I'm sorry to hear that."

Suddenly the lights of the theatre began to blink on and off.

"Well," Job said. "I think that's our cue to make our way into the screening room. Why don't we move inside and find our seats?" As he ushered Margaret and the two new residents through the main foyer he noticed Mel standing just outside the front entrance, a confused expression on his face as he stared up at the blinking lights.

"Hello, Mel," Job said. "Are you ready to come inside?"

Mel turned his gaze towards the doctor, his face void of emotion. "Of course I am," he said abruptly. "But you might want to get these lights checked. They keep flickering."

"I'll look into it," Job said with a smile. "Why don't we go in and find a seat."

Job made his way into the theatre, then waited until Mae, Karen and the remaining stragglers entered the room before closing the doors behind him.

* * * * *

As Job sat watching the exciting events of *The Towering Inferno* unfold, he was surprised to find himself completely caught up in the escalating drama of the film. It wasn't until the movie was well past the half-way point that he finally looked around him into the dimly-lit faces of the residents in order to gauge their reactions. Mel was perched on the edge of his seat, eyes transfixed on the screen while mumbling quietly to himself. His words were inaudible from where Job was sitting. Job felt his brow furrowing as he continued to watch Mel squirm uncomfortably, his mumblings becoming progressively more audible. Suddenly Mel gave a start and jerked one of his arms up over his head. "Everybody get out of the building!" he shouted.

Job slipped quickly from his seat and moved over to the vacant spot beside Mel. "Everything's okay, Mel," he said. "It's only a movie."

Mel turned to Job, his eyes wide. "I know that, Doug," he said in a loud voice.

Job paused, then gently patted Mel reassuringly on the shoulder. "All right, Mel. Just let me know if there's anything you need, okay?"

Mel continued to stare wildly into his face. "I'll be fine, Doug, but you should be thinking about all of the other people in here."

"Alright," Job said doubtfully, getting slowly to his feet. "Just remember that I'll be sitting over there in the next row, in case you need me." He nodded towards the spot he had just vacated, then returned and dropped back into his seat.

"Is everything all right, Doctor?" Margaret whispered.

"I think everything's okay," he said. "It's a funny thing, though, Mel just called me *Doug*. He's never usually gets my name wrong."

Margaret frowned. "Isn't Doug the name of one of the characters in the movie?"

Job stared at Margaret for a moment, rubbing his chin thoughtfully. He could feel the blood running from his face as he considered her words. "We may have a potential situation here, Margaret. What do you think?" He looked back across the room to Mel, who remained perched on the very edge of his seat, his eyes darting about the room in every direction. Several of the residents sitting near Mel were now eyeing their colleague warily.

"It's all burning!" Mel shouted, scrambling to his feet. "We've got to get out of here!"

A number of the residents sitting near Mel turned towards him uneasily. "Be quiet, Mel, we're trying to watch the movie!" a voice shouted from the back.

"Are all of you people blind?" Mel replied loudly. "We're all going to burn alive in here if we don't find a way to get out!"

Job turned to Margaret and rolled his eyes. "Here we go again," he said in a low voice. "I'll have to take him outside before he starts a riot."

"Do you need me to do anything?" Margaret asked.

"Not at the moment," Job replied. "But you'd better stand by just in case." He got back to his feet and slipped over to the seat closest to Mel's.

"Mel, why don't we go outside for a little walk, and I'll take you back to your room."

"Back to my room?" Mel shouted, turning to face Job. "Are you blind, Doug? Can't you see that the entire building's on fire? The room is filling with smoke!"

"Try to calm down, Mel," Job said. "We're perfectly safe in here."

"You're trying to trick me so you can get out first," Mel shouted. "Well, you can't fool me. I can see that we're all trapped. All the exits are blocked by the fire!"

A resident sitting in the next aisle suddenly got to her feet, a terrified look on her face. "Is the building really on fire? Are we all going to die in here?" She asked.

Job looked over at the alarmed resident. "No, no," Job said in a loud voice. "There's no reason to be alarmed, the building's not on fire. Everything's just fine."

"Don't listen to him," Mel shouted, backing down the aisle. "He's lying!"

"I'm not lying to you, Mel." Job said, turning to Margaret who was now on her feet, looking nervously towards him. "Margaret, would you mind going upstairs to the projection room and asking them to switch off the movie?"

Mel looked frantically around the darkened room, his eyes darting from face to face. Suddenly he lunged forward without warning, grabbing Mae by her arm and pulling her out of her seat. "Nobody move," Mel shouted, wrapping his thick forearm around Mae's throat. "No one is leaving me behind to die in this inferno!"

Mae screamed.

Margaret froze a few steps short of the exit.

"We're all going to die!" someone screamed.

"No one's going to die," Job shouted. "Just stay in your seats."

The remainder of the audience sat in stunned silence as they watch Mel pull out a small metal pen from his pocket, holding it up threateningly against Mae's throat.

"Well, If you're not going to act, then I will!" Mel responded.

He dragged Mae a few steps closer to the back wall of the theatre, Job cautiously keeping pace with the other man. "Calm down, Mel," he said keeping his eye on Mae's frightened face. "Just let her go and we can talk this through together. No one needs to get hurt."

Mel continued dragging Mae the remainder of the way up the aisle before stopping near the exit. Mae's hands were now clenched tightly to Mel's forearm. Job could see that Mel's grip was making it almost impossible for her to breathe.

"Be careful, Mel," Job said in a loud voice. "You're hurting Mae!"

"Somebody better do something or we'll all be in a lot of trouble," Mel said. He stood there for a few seconds his eyes fastened to the fire alarm on the wall by the doorway.

Suddenly he raised his elbow and swung it violently at the glass-covered box, almost yanking Mae off her feet in the process. Pieces of glass flew everywhere.

"Mel!" Job shouted.

Before Job had time to react, Mel reached his free hand into the small red box and pulled down hard on the handle. Almost instantly they heard the sound of the fire alarm beginning to wail loudly throughout the entire building.

Job turned his attention to the other residents, fearing their reactions. "Everybody stay calm," he shouted. "Please stay where you are. It's just a false alarm." He then turned to Margaret and beckoned her closer. "Margaret," he said, his voice barely audible above the sound of the movie and the fire alarm. "Why don't you try sneaking out the back door while I divert his attention, and then turn the lights back on and shut off the movie."

Margaret nodded.

"And one more thing," Job continued. "Talk to the firemen when they arrive. They

shouldn't be long. The station's only a few blocks from here. Ask one of them to empty out his fire extinguisher on the entryway closest to Mel, like he's putting out a fire."

"Right, Doctor." Margaret said nervously.

As Margaret turned towards the entrance, Mel took a couple of steps towards Job, dragging Mae with him. "What's going on over there?" he shouted.

Job moved away from Margaret and took several steps back towards Mel, all the while keeping his eyes on the hysterical man before him. "Everything will be okay, Mel. We're just trying to come up with a plan to get everybody out."

"What kind of plan?" Mel asked. "We don't have much time left!"

Job watched Margaret slip past Mel and disappear through the exit doors. "Now we're going to need everyone's cooperation, Mel," he said, "So why don't you let Mae go? Then we can work together on figuring out a way to get out of here."

"No!" Mel shouted, yanking even harder on Mae's neck. "You're lying to me. You're just trying to trick me so you can get out of the building first!"

"No, Mel. That's not true. I'm just trying to help. We're all in this together, so why don't you ease up on Mae? Can't you see that you're hurting her?"

Mel glanced down at Mae out of the corner of his eye just as the sound of the projector abruptly died, and the lights in the theatre flickered back to life.

Mel scanned the brightly lit room, a confused look on his face.

"See," Job said. "Everything's fine. We just turned the lights back on."

"Everything is not fine," Mel shouted loudly. "How can you say that everything's going to be fine when all of the entryways are on fire and we we're all trapped inside this room?"

Karen, who had been seated right behind Job, started edging towards the doorway. "I'm scared, Doctor," she said. "I don't want to be in here anymore."

"We're getting out of here soon, Karen," Job said reassuringly. "Help is on the way. Why don't you just sit down for a few minutes, everything will be over soon."

Job glanced around the room at the other residents. Several pairs of frightened eyes looked back at him. He forced a reassuring smile. "Everything is going to be all right," he said. In the distance he could now hear the sound of sirens.

Mel was standing a few feet from the exit glancing around the room as if desperate to find another means of escape. It was at that moment that the fire alarm abruptly stopped and their attention was diverted to the voices outside the room.

"See, Mel," Job said. "Help has arrived. There's no need to panic."

Mel turned his attention towards the exit, his breath now coming in short rasping gasps. "They better get here soon or I am going to take matters into my own hands."

A sudden noise from the entrance-way drew everyone's attention.

"Everybody stand clear!" a loud voice shouted. An instant later there was a tremendous *whooshing* sound, and what appeared to be great billows of white smoke covering the doorway.

A moment later a fireman appeared before them, fire extinguisher in hand, spraying the remainder of the powdered substance around the door-frame.

"Is everyone all right in here?" he asked.

Mel immediately released Mae, dropping her down hard onto the floor, then rushed through the doorway. He had barely managed to escape the room when he was grabbed by two large orderlies, who were waiting with the fireman on the other side.

"Come on, Mel," one of the men said calmly. "Let's get you out of this place and back to where you'll be safe and sound."

Job quickly rushed over to Mae, who had already climbed back to her feet and was rubbing her neck gingerly. "Are you all right, Mae?"

Mae nodded, dropping into a nearby seat. "I think so."

A number of residents crowded in around Job as several more of the firemen entered the room. "Alright, everyone," Job said. "Let's all calmly make our way out of here."

Chapter Seventeen

Job leaned forward in his seat, looking across the conference table at John Moore's composed face. Roger Gardner, sitting to John's left, glanced around impatiently when the doors to the meeting room suddenly opened and Jim Borman stepped inside. Jim nodded to those present before taking a seat at the end of the table.

"All right, gentlemen," Doctor Moore said. "Let's bring this meeting to order."

Doctor Borman dropped his briefcase onto the table in front of him, snapped it open and removed a large file. "If you don't mind, Doctor Moore, I'd like to begin."

Doctor Moore nodded, sagging back into his chair. "All right, Doctor Borman. Proceed."

Doctor Borman slammed his briefcase shut and then looked up into the faces of the four men seated around him. "First of all, would someone mind telling me exactly why the police and fire department had to be called to the facility last night?"

Doctor Moore waved his hand dismissively. "Oh, don't worry about that. It wasn't anything serious," he said. "One of our residents just had an episode."

"Those kinds of incidents are fairly common," Doctor Gardner added.

"Fairly common!?" Job's echoed. "You can't seriously be trying to downplay what happened last night?" Job's voice rose dangerously. "Mel's so called 'episode' was clearly a very dramatic psychotic break, most likely a result of the additional drugs that he's been prescribed. This is a very serious matter that needs to be addressed!"

Ed looked across the table at Job. "If it wasn't for Doctor Anderson's quick thinking in getting the situation under control, who knows what might have happened?"

Doctor Moore shifted uncomfortably in his seat. "Calm down, everyone. There's no reason to get so excited. We're all part of the same team here."

Doctor Borman turned back to the chief physician, his eyes narrowing. "That's where you're wrong, Doctor," he said. "There's a lot to get excited about. And it sounds like last night's events could have been a much bigger deal had it not been for Doctor Anderson's actions."

Job sat upright in his seat, acting somewhat surprised by the support offered to him.

Doctor Borman opened the file before him, and fixed his gaze across the table at John Moore. "Over the last few days I've uncovered a substantial amount of evidence that would indicate a deliberate manipulation in the treatment of the residents in this facility for the financial gain of certain individuals. Yesterday's revelation was merely the tip of the iceberg."

Doctor Moore's eyes grew wide at the man's accusation. "You can't seriously be suggesting that any of the physicians in our facility are on the take?"

"That's exactly what I'm suggesting," Doctor Borman responded, pausing for a brief moment. "Not only do I think that you, Doctor Moore, are one of the principal players in this little sordid affair, but Doctor Gardner appears to have his hand in it as well."

"Excuse me, Doctor Borman, but accusations of this nature require more than your misguided suppositions. You'd better have some evidence to back up your claims."

Doctor Borman smiled as he removed several pages from the file before him. "And that's exactly what I brought to this meeting, gentlemen," he said, slipping the pages across the table to Doctor Moore. "Why don't you take a look at these documents."

Job glanced over at Ed, suppressing a smile. Ed gave his friend a quick nod.

Doctor Moore reluctantly picked up the papers and stared down blankly at the first sheet.

After a moment he lowered them back to the table and turned to Doctor Borman.

"Perhaps next time you should deal strictly in cash," Doctor Borman said sarcastically.

Roger leaned over and picked up the papers from Doctor Moore. After perusing the first document for a brief moment he quickly flipped through the others. "You've got to believe me, Doctor Borman," he said. "I had no idea what was going on. I really thought the medications we were prescribing were for the betterment of the residents."

"It appears that you couldn't be further from the truth, Doctor Gardner." Doctor Borman replied. "According to the email correspondences made between yourself and Doctor Moore, you've been well aware of what's been going on with Ellis Pharmaceuticals."

"Our personal emails are confidential!" Doctor Gardner shouted.

Doctor Borman smiled. "Not when they're sent from company computers, on company time. We have every right to access them. Regardless, you should be well aware of the dangers of over-medication, especially from untested and possibly dangerous drugs. It has become painfully clear that you have been just as involved in this affair as Doctor Moore, but that's for the board members to decide. As of this moment, you are both under suspension until a detailed investigation of these events is concluded. In the meantime, if Doctor Burrows is willing, he will serve in the capacity as acting chief physician of this facility. Doctor Burrows has served this residence for over ten years, and has had previous experience in management. He appears to be the natural choice to assume this interim position." He turned to Ed. "That being said, Doctor Burrows, are you willing to take on this responsibility until this matter is cleared up?"

Ed leaned forward in his chair. "It would be an honour," he said with a smile. "I appreciate your consideration and I will do my best serving in this capacity."

Job leaned over and patted his friend on the shoulder.

Doctor Moore slammed his fist down on the table. "You can't do this, Jim! Make no mistake, I will be contacting my lawyers this afternoon. We will fight this!"

"I expected you would," Doctor Borman replied. "You'd better have good lawyers."

Doctor Borman turned his attention to Job. "Doctor Anderson, I was hoping that under these unusual circumstances, you would consider serving as Doctor Burrow's second-in-command for the time being. You will both have to work extra hard in order to get this facility back up to standards while you're short-staffed for the next few weeks."

Job took several long seconds to respond. "I appreciate the opportunity," he finally said. "I'm sure I speak for Doctor Burrows when I say that we'll do our very best."

Doctor Borman collected his papers and returned them to his briefcase. He then turned to Ed. "Let me know if there's anything I can do to help you make your transition any easier," he said. "In the meantime I will be taking my findings to the College of Physicians for them to review. I'm sure they'll be getting in touch with all of you very shortly."

"What do we do in the meantime?" Ed asked.

"Carry on as usual gentlemen," Doctor Borman suggested. "I'll be calling a general staff meeting later today to bring everyone else up to speed on the situation."

Doctor Borman snapped his briefcase shut. "That's all for now, gentlemen. Have a good day." With that he slipped from his chair and walked calmly towards the door to make his exit. As the door closed behind him Job got slowly to his feet, his eyes fixed on the two doctors sitting across from him. "Gentlemen," he said with a nod. "It's been a pleasure."

The anger was clearly evident on the faces of Doctor Moore and Doctor Gardner as Job

and Ed made their way out of the boardroom.

As the door closed behind them Job reached out and shook his friend's hand. "For the amount of work you put into this investigation, Ed, you truly deserve this promotion."

"I only made a few of phone calls," Ed said modestly. "You were the one who stuck his neck out. It's always refreshing to see a man sticking by his convictions, especially when he ends up being vindicated. On behalf of the residents, we thank you."

"I'm just happy to have someone with such integrity that I can also call a friend," Job said, reaching out his arms. "Give me a hug, big guy!"

"Let's not overdo it!" Ed said with a laugh.

Job smiled as he watched his colleague make his way out of the building. He then walked the remainder of the way down the corridor to the nurses' station. As he approached the desk, Margaret looked up at him with a puzzled expression.

"My, you look pleased with yourself, Doctor Anderson."

"I have good reason to be," Job agreed.

"What do you mean by that?" Margaret asked.

"Well, let's just say that as of now, our good friend Doctor Burrows will be taking over as acting chief physician of this esteemed institution."

"How did that happen?" Margaret asked, her eyes widening.

"Well, without getting into too many details," Job said, "It seems that Doctor Moore and Doctor Gardner's services will no longer be required at this facility."

Margaret turned her head to one side, eyeing him inquisitively. "Why do I get the feeling that you were somehow involved?"

"I don't know what on earth ever gave you that idea." He said with a grin.

"Just call it woman's intuition," she said with a smile. "Perhaps now that Doctor Burrows is Chief Physician we can get finally some action on all of those supply requisitions."

"He just got the job and you're already eager to order him around?" Job said with a laugh. "I thought you'd wait at least until after lunch."

"Perhaps I should ask for your help instead." Margaret said sarcastically.

"I have nothing to do with the orders, Margaret. If that's what you're getting at."

Margaret sighed. "Fine. So what's on your agenda for today?"

"I have a couple of meet-and-greets with the new residents." Job replied.

At that moment Julie joined them at the nurses' station. Margaret turned to her colleague, smiling broadly. "Guess what, Julie? Doctor Anderson was just telling me that our good friend, Doctor Burrows, will be acting as our new chief physician."

Julie's eyes grew wide. "Is that right?"

Margaret nudged Julie with her elbow. "And don't you also have something that you wanted to tell Doctor Anderson?" She asked, eyebrows raised.

Julie stood there for a moment, clumsily adjusting her name-tag before finally speaking. "I think I may have finally come to a decision," she said.

"What decision is that?" Job asked.

"Well," Julie said, hesitating once again. "As soon as I finish my nursing program at the end this term, I've decided to spend some time at home with my son before starting my career."

"That's exciting news, Julie!" Job said with a broad smile.

Julie's face immediately relaxed. "You really think so?" she replied. "I thought you might

be angry about me leaving this place after all of the time I spent training here."

"Of course I'm not angry with you," Job said, "I'm sorry that I won't get to see you again while you're away, but it's always nice to see a family spending more time with each another. You know that you're always welcome back here whenever you decide to return to nursing."

A sudden voice broke into their conversation. "Doctor Anderson!"

Job turned to see Sarah approaching. He gave her a quick wave and then turned back to Margaret and Julie. "I think this is the start of another busy day."

"God speed," Margaret said with a smile.

Job turned to Sarah who was now standing before him.

"Good morning, Sarah," he said, eyeing the girl suspiciously. "What's going on?"

"I've got some great news to tell you!" She said.

Job's face relaxed. "What's on your mind."

"When I arrived here this morning, Mae was already crying," Sarah explained. "And when I asked her what was wrong, all she could tell me was that she was really upset."

"Did she tell you why she was upset?" Job asked.

"She was really shaken up about what happened last night. The incident made her realize what could have happened to her if ... you know ... you hadn't been there to help."

"What did you say to her?" Job asked.

Sarah's face brightened. "Why don't you ask her yourself?" she said with a smile. Sarah reached out and grabbed Job's hand, almost dragging him down the corridor to Mae's room.

When they reached the open door, Sarah stuck her head inside. "Hey, Mae. Look who I found." She then pulled Job the rest of the way into the room.

"Good morning, Mae." Job said.

Mae was sitting at her desk, busy writing in a spiral-bound notebook. She immediately looked up, smiling broadly. "Good morning, Doctor Anderson."

"I heard that you have something you'd like to share with me, Mae."

Mae glanced over at her sister. "Word sure gets around fast, doesn't it," she said.

"I couldn't help it!" Sarah replied.

"I'm not sure what she's already told you," Mae said, getting to her feet, "But I've made an important decision." She paused, seeming to gauge Job's reaction. "I decided to trust in Christ."

Job stood for a moment in the doorway, a big grin on his face. He then quickly crossed the room and gave Mae a warm hug. "I'm so proud of you, Mae."

Sarah hurried over to her sister and wrapped her arms around her.

"What made you decide to take this step?" Job asked.

Mae hesitated for a moment. "Well, I just couldn't get over the change that I've witnessed in Sarah the last few weeks. It was almost as if she had matured ten years overnight! Then I examined my own life, and all I could see was someone who was filled with self-pity, someone who was always blaming God for every bad thing that's ever happened in my life."

"God is faithful with His promises, isn't He?" Job said. "He was able to see you through all of your trials, tribulations and even a number of heartbreaks."

Sarah gave her sister another long hug. "You should be proud of yourself, Mae. Look at all the changes you've made these last few days. You've had so many bad things happen to you, and yet in spite of all these difficulties you've still managed to overcome them."

Mae smiled. "Yes, I'm a regular Rosa Parks."

Job laughed. "Don't sell yourself short, Mae. You've made a lot of progress since you've been with us. You should give yourself more credit."

"That's right, Mae," Sarah said encouragingly.

Mae smiled warmly at her sister, then looked back up at Job. "Sarah and I have one more request, Doctor Anderson," she said. "If it's not too much trouble."

"I'd be happy to help. What can I do for you?" Job asked.

"Well," Mae continued. "I'm not sure if this is something you're able to do as a Doctor, but Sarah and I were hoping to get baptized tomorrow afternoon, and we were wondering if you would be willing to perform the ceremony for us? That is if you're not busy."

Job smiled. "I couldn't think of a better way to spend my Saturday."

Chapter Eighteen

A small crowd was clustered together in the middle of the courtyard talking quietly amongst themselves. A cool autumn breeze wafted across the open area as Job stepped down into a large water-filled tank which was situated directly in the centre of the crowd. The water rose up past Job's waist as he slowly moved through the tank, holding a Bible carefully over his head.

He paused for a moment while acclimatizing himself to the cool water, then looked out over the crowd. "Could I have everyone's attention, please?" he shouted.

The voices immediately faded to quiet as all heads turned in his direction.

Job cleared his throat, managing a small grin. "I just want to thank everyone for coming out to our celebration today - especially John and Deborah Fulton, who generously paid for the rental of this baptismal tank, not too mention persuading our management team to allow us to perform a baptismal ceremony on site, and considering the amount of red tape they must have endured in the last few hours to make all of this happen, it couldn't have been easy."

The people gathered before him applauded warmly.

"I want to begin by reading a passage from the Bible." Job said.

He opened the large book to a page marked with a long string of silk. "In the Bible the book of Acts tells the story of Peter and the apostles speaking to the children of Israel immediately after Christ had been crucified. Peter says to them, *Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.* When the people heard this the Bible says they were cut to the heart. And they said to Peter and rest of the apostles, *Men and brethren, what shall we do?* And Peter said to them,

Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

Job glanced at the faces gathered before him. He smiled at Mae and Sarah who were standing next to their parents. Paul also wrote the following verse found in the book of Ephesians; *For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God - not by works, lest any man should boast.*” He closed his Bible.

"It's important that we remember just how amazing this free gift of salvation really is. It's truly incredible to think that God is willing to forgive even a wretched sinner such as myself. I'm ashamed to admit the number of times that I've sinned against God, especially in my youth. As a matter of fact it wasn't until I was in college that I realized what a miserable sinner I really was, and how desperately I needed to be saved from the consequences of my sin. Thankfully, two thousand years ago, God, in His infinite mercy sent us His only Son, Jesus Christ, to take our sins upon Himself so that by trusting in Him, we can stand forgiven before God."

Job paused, setting his Bible on a table which had been placed next to the tank. He then looked back over to Mae and Sarah and beckoned them forward. Mae led her younger sister up the stairs and then watched quietly as Sarah waded out into the cool waters of the baptismal tank.

"Jesus Christ was given to us by God to redeem us from our sins," Job continued. "And Sarah and Mae have trusted in the promise of God's forgiveness." He moved over to Sarah's side, putting one hand on her shoulder and then placed his other hand over her wrists which were folded over her chest. "In the waters of baptism we die to our old self and are raised to a new life in Christ. Sarah, have you placed your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for your salvation?"

Sarah nodded. "I have."

"Then upon this, your confession of faith, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

With that Job leaned Sarah backwards into the shallow waters, pausing briefly as she dipped below the surface, then pulled her back up to her feet. The small crowd of spectators applauded enthusiastically as she made her way up the stairs and out of the tank. Mae then stepped down into the waters and waded over to where Job was standing. Job placed a hand on her shoulder then cupped his other hand around her wrists.

"Mae, have you placed your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for your salvation?"

Mae looked up at Job and smiled. "Yes, I have," she said. "With all my heart."

"Then upon this, your confession of faith, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

Job leaned Mae back into the water, then pulled her to her feet. As Mae made her way out of the baptismal tank, Job turned once again to the audience. "All of us gathered here today are witnessing the promise of salvation that was won for us through Jesus Christ. It was through *His* sacrifice that our sins can be forgiven, and like Sarah and Mae, we can start our lives anew."

Job smiled warmly at the small crowd. "I'd like to thank all of you for being here this afternoon to witness this monumental event," he said. "We'd like to end our service by singing a couple of hymns together, beginning with *Amazing Grace*, which was requested by Mae and Sarah. I believe William has distributed song sheets for everyone." Job then turned to Phil, who was poised with his violin tucked under his chin, and nodded. Phil immediately began sliding his bow across the strings, leading the small group together in singing the old favourite.

Job then climbed out of the water humming along to the tune and found William waiting at the bottom of the steps with a towel. Job took his towel and draped it around his neck, then followed Mae and Sarah into the crowd of people to where their parents were waiting. Mr. and Mrs. Fulton gave each of their daughters awkward hugs before turning their attention to Job.

"Congratulations, ladies," Job said quietly, smiling broadly at Mae and Sarah.

"We can't thank you enough for all you've done, Doctor Anderson," Sarah said.

"Yes, we really owe you a debt of gratitude," Mae agreed, her voice breaking. She wiped a hand across her eyes and gave Job a quick hug.

"So what are your plans, now, Mae?" Job asked.

"Well, I was really inspired by Julie's decision to stay at home with her children."

"How so?" Job asked curiously.

"Well, not everyone has a family to spend their lives with, so I thought I would volunteer my time by helping others who have lost someone close to them."

Job smiled. "We're sure going to miss you around here, Mae, but I don't think you could have made a more noble decision. I hope you'll come back to visit us."

"That won't be necessary," Mae said. "Some of the friends I have made here are the very people I want to spend my time with. This is one of the places that I want to volunteer."

Job smiled as he gave her another hug. "That's wonderful, Mae."

A sudden voice interrupted their conversation as Job turned to see Phil standing close behind him, fiddle in hand.

"Mae, why don't you accompany us with your flute on the next hymn?" Phil asked.

"Sure, Phil, I'll be there in a minute," She replied.

"Well, Doctor Anderson," Mae said. "It looks like I'm needed elsewhere." She turned to her sister. "Come on, Sarah. Let's go join in the celebration."

Job watched as the two women joined the small crowd of people. He saw Mae remove the black and silver piccolo from its emerald-coloured case. Slowly, she brought the instrument up to her mouth. Then as all of those gathered around turned their attention to Mae, the soft sweet sounds of the piccolo could be heard, rising upward into the still afternoon air.