

Foresight

“Any hereditary blood pressure issues?”

“Not that I know of.”

John looked through his sheets on his clipboard. He pretended to flip through and write things down. He had already filled out the basic information. Nothing seemed wrong with the man; Peter was his name. John just liked the company.

“Any personal history of migraines, especially around the neck or eyes, not counting a mean hangover?” John asked.

“Not really.” Peter said, smirking.

They both shared a chuckle. John enjoyed the little banter he shared with his patients now that he seemed to have a new aura of approachability. He was confident, a new man. His new power had the ability to provide people with security and relief, which John was happy to provide. Very few actually knew of his newly acquired clairvoyant ability, and yet his patients were always satisfied by his confidence in their future.

John sat down in his squeaky chair in his small office separated from the CT scanning room by a thin pane of glass. He typed some things up for a bit, then sat back and waited. The screen flickered, then cut to black. John leaned forward, his eyes squinting. A gray swirl formed slowly on the screen, gradually expanding. In the center of the vortex of gray, an image formed of Peter, sitting in a wheelchair, smiling and waving to the clapping nurses as he is wheeled out of the white hallways of Chumwater General. John exhaled and smiled, leaning back in his chair with his hands laced behind his head in relief. He exited his office and walked into the CT scanning room and told Peter the good news. Peter would beat his cancer. And John got to tell him.

John walked to his office and started on his paperwork that he needed done yesterday. He thought about the mysterious stranger who had ominously foretold his acquisition of his new clairvoyant power. The man was incredibly old. He looked and smelled as if he was decaying. He had come in for a CT scan after suffering a nasty fall in his home. As John prepped him to be put into the machine, the man snatched John's wrist with an strangely strong grip. He grew very still, his natural age-driven tremors ceasing completely. His cloudy eyes stopped drifting around and quickly trained themselves on John. John paused his strapping and button-pushing to look at the man. A thin raspy voice escaped his barely moving lips.

“Both the power and the attention you seek comes with a price. I give to you sight beyond sight, so that it may bring to you the love you so pine for. But be warned, the abuse of your power and the elevation of your ambition may bring about your death.”

The old man returned to his aged state as if nothing happened. John remembered how he just stood looking at the man, completely bewildered. Chalking it up to the ramblings of the elderly, he continued his scan and sent the man, who was seemingly fine, along his way. The next day, John was conducting a routine scan when his screen suddenly went black, then returned to life with an image of what was clearly his patient's future. The revelation had both shocked and excited John. He assumed he would be the talk of the town. The amount of people that would want to meet him... Perhaps even a certain someone from his department.

Roused from his reminiscent state, John continued working on filling out papers. He heard the squeaking of tennis shoes approaching his door from the hall. Tiffany rapped her knuckles on the open office door. John perked up and waved Tiffany in. They chatted, and as she left, she asked if he was ready for their date. She didn't use the word 'date' of course, but surely she knew what this was, John thought. He tapped his leg, trying to hide his boyish excitement.

He had been trying to get Tiffany to go out with him for years. Now, with satisfied patients coming and going, praising John to no end, Tiffany took notice of him.

“Of course!” he said, “It’ll be a treat.”

John and Tiffany drunkenly stumbled out of the restaurant chortling at some joke neither of them remembered. John saw Tiffany glance at her watch and frantically tried to think of something to do so that he could keep her a little longer.

“Hey, I know! Let’s head back to my office. I’ve got something cool to show you.”

They headed back to Chumwater, whose CT wing was nearly abandoned. Nobody really scheduled a scan during the wee hours unless it was an emergency. John led a giggling Tiffany to the scanning room where he strapped her in. Plopping down in his office chair, he typed the necessary information and dramatically poked the ‘enter’ key. John waited patiently for the image.

Something was wrong. The image that appeared shifted and twisted. It was a different setting every time, but it was essentially the same: some four wheeled vehicle slamming into Tiffany. In every single one, she wore the same clothes as she wore tonight.

John shook himself out of his stupor. Wordlessly, he retrieved Tiffany and dragged her outside. He needed to get her home. She protested, asking what was wrong. John’s mind was scattered. He frantically tried to convince Tiffany they needed to leave. Tiffany seemed to sober up, sensing danger. John led her out to the street and waited for a total absence of cars before rushing across to the hospital parking lot.

Out of the shadows, a sedan whipped around a corner and straight toward them. John swiftly snatched Tiffany out of the way just in time. He held her close while they both breathed raggedly, staring into each other's eyes. They began to laugh.

The next thing John saw was her thin shaking hand reaching out to him from the pavement. He was on the pavement, but couldn't feel anything from the neck down. A moving truck covered in something red emitted smoke as it sat wrapped around a light pole. Tiffany's eyes fluttered shut, her hand falling into the pool of blood on the pavement. John saw the ancient-looking man standing across the street, his eyes now glowing a dark red. The red flash of an ambulance rounding the corner of the building distracted John, and when he looked again, the man was gone. John thought about how he had never scanned himself. Perhaps this was his future. John never even saw it coming.