

Chapter 2: The Abduction and Confusion

Olivia didn't receive the phone call about Peter's sudden illness until well after 4:00pm. She had spent the leisurely morning mostly in bed, the rest sipping on coffee while watching nothing special on TV. Both Rachel and Ella had moved into their new townhouse on the other side town a couple months ago, but it still felt weird to be the only one in the house—alone amongst silent walls. It was very uncomfortable at first, but maybe she was getting used to it. At least that's what she told herself to believe.

Yesterday was a day unlike any other, a walk through a distant past, both foreign and frightening, and to the very brink of this universe. She was tired to say the least. More than anything else, however, she felt distraught. She had seen the glimmer of the building about to be sucked to the alternate universe and saved hundreds of lives in the process, but her newly awakened ability seemed to destroy her own. She had seen it—that shimmering light dancing all over him, Peter... How she hoped it was her imagination, still she knew it was true... Walter confirmed it when he pleaded for her not to say anything. And that evening out was beyond difficult to pretend that nothing was wrong. Should she tell Peter the truth? He had every right to know and yet what good would it do? What if he left after he found out the truth? What then? Olivia was trapped. Damned if you do, damned if you don't.

But then the call came while she sipped on a warm vanilla latte in her favorite butterfly mug.

"Agent Dunham," she said officially, even though she was off duty today.

"He's sick, Olivia. It's happening again. I don't know if he'll make it this time."

It was Walter, she knew, but what was he saying? He couldn't be talking about Peter; she had just been with him last night and he was fine. "Walter, slow down. What happened?"

"I went out with Agent Farnsworth for some apple fritters and when I came home, Peter was barely conscious, completely delirious—he called me 'daddy.'"

Olivia couldn't follow him well but with the last statement she knew something was very wrong. She never imagined Peter to ever call Walter by that name.

"Okay, Walter, listen," she said, trying to steady her own voice. "Where are you now? I'll come over and—"

"Mass General. Olivia, please... I don't know what to do," he sobbed.

Massachusetts General Hospital? Dear God, whatever must be going on, it must be serious if Peter was already taken to the hospital...

“I’ll be right there.”

The whole way to the hospital, Olivia kept thinking of the possibilities of what could have happened. Walter had said Peter was sick—again. Did that mean that he had been sick another time, when he was younger? She never really knew much about his childhood; she just knew that Peter estranged himself from both father and mother of his own accord. His mother died several years ago, a tragic fact that Walter was all but privy to while in the confines of St. Clair’s Mental Hospital, no one even bothered to tell him the news, for that matter. But if Peter had gotten sick, he was around Olivia and many other people from the FBI. Did that mean that she, too, was exposed to something? If that was the case, wouldn’t Walter have given her some sort of warning or clue? Maybe whatever he had wasn’t contagious.

With her mind taking five steps forward with speculations only to turn around and fall seven steps back, Olivia pulled into the parking lot at Massachusetts General Hospital. She stepped quickly out of the car with both keys and cell phone in her hand, tucking them safely into her leather jacket, and made her way into the building. As she approached the reception desk, she looked anxiously into the blue eyes of the young receptionist with curly brown hair that barely touched her shoulders.

“Excuse me, could you tell me which room Peter Bishop was taken to?”

The woman nodded and turned to her computer, typing in the name. “It looks like only family are allowed visitation at this time. Are you family?”

Olivia grinned painfully as she held up her FBI badge. She admitted her job did come in handy at times. “No, I’m not. I’m here on FBI business.”

She could have explained further, that Peter was something of a partner to her, a close colleague, someone who she had just gone out to have drinks with the night before, that... Swallowing hard, her hand began to shake nervously as she held up her badge. Although she had felt this coming for sometime, she refused to acknowledge its existence in her heart. Maybe because of her recent betrayal and loss of John Scott, maybe because of all her previous shattered relationships, maybe because of her experience living under the same roof as a wife-beater. She was never very good at serious relationship talk, even if it was with herself. This was the reality of her lonely life in “limbo.”

The receptionist looked at Olivia’s FBI badge and nodded again. “Ah, Agent Dunham, we’ve been expecting you. The father of the patient told us to be on the look-out for you. Peter Bishop is in room #704, on the seventh floor.”

“Thank you,” Olivia said, placing her badge in the inner pocket of her jacket as she turned around and hurried over to the elevators. She impatiently hit the up arrow button repeatedly as though it would make the elevator come faster.

A little girl with crazy black hair meshed all over the place, who stood waiting for the elevators with her mother, stared at Olivia pushing the button as though wondering why she was pushing it so crazily. Olivia didn’t notice anyone standing there until she heard the little girl’s voice say, “Mama, can I push the button, too?”

At the sound of the girl’s voice, Olivia turned her head to see the two standing next to her and suddenly felt stupid. What a great example she was setting. *Patience, Olivia, relax...*

“No, honey,” the woman with short, curly black hair said softly. “The button’s already been pushed.” Olivia imagined her continuing on to say, “It’s pointless to keep pressing it once it’s been pressed once, sweetheart.”

At last, the elevator dinged as the two doors opened to a group of young mother’s holding their little children. Some sort of mother and baby class must have been going on upstairs or something, Olivia thought. Allowing the group out of the elevator, Olivia stepped into the elevator while putting an arm at the side of the opening to prevent the doors from closing before the other two could enter.

The lady with the short black hair didn’t say anything directly to her but simply nodded in appreciation when she pressed the number 3 button. Olivia passed the awkward moment by pressing the number 7 button herself as the elevator doors closed and they were slowly lifted upward. Skipping over the 2nd floor, the elevator came to a slow stop at the 3rd floor. Olivia pressed the doors open button as the mother and daughter walked out and on their way down the hall.

Finally alone to catch her breath before reaching the 7th floor, she sighed and turned to look at herself in the mirror at the back of the elevator. She almost didn’t recognize herself. Her eyes were clouded with anticipation of pending bad news, her heart ached at every beat, and she nervously dug the nail of her index finger into the base of her thumb nail. Too often she would get bloody hangnails from doing that.

Staring at her own eyes in the mirror she tried to come to terms with her own emotions. Why was she feeling this way? *That’s easy*, she thought, *Peter’s my friend. It’s only natural to be worried about him.* Then what was the cause for the pain in her chest, and why did she dread to find out the truth that waited for her in room #704 so much? As she peered through her green eyes, she could find no tangible answer and yet she knew. She had known for a while...

The elevator dinged again loudly, breaking her out of her trance. She looked to see what floor this was, and when the number 7 was illuminated with green light, she quickly darted out of the two doors, nearly running into an old man and woman who were waiting for the elevator. "Sorry," she said without so much of a glance back.

Her eyes searched for the sign that would tell her which way down the hall Room #704 was—*Ah, there it is!* she thought. *Down to the right...* She dashed on down the hall with no regard to the nurses at the desk who called out to her.

Once she came to the room with the number she had been looking for on it, she stood, staring at the name plate that indicated who was admitted within. She read the name over three or more times before taking a deep breath. *Is this what it was like for him, when I was in the hospital...?* With her heart pounding, she placed a chill hand on the metal doorknob and, turning, pushed the door open.

The room inside was dark, the curtains over the large hospital windows tightly pulled shut. The only light in the room was the single, standing lamp that was in the left hand corner next to the window and a cushioned chair. As Olivia stepped further inside, she saw Walter sitting at the side of the bed where Peter lie, using a wet cloth to cool Peter's forehead. Once her eyes fell upon Peter, though, she couldn't take her eyes away from him. Stepping closer, she saw how red his skin looked, soaked with sweat. Although, it could have been the dimly lit room, but she could have sworn he wasn't even breathing.

How could this have happened? He was fine last night... He was fine...

Walter looked up at Olivia as she bent lower over Peter. "The doctors said that he will need to be put on a breathing machine if he doesn't regain a natural rhythm soon."

A breathing machine even...? How could this happen?

"Walter, what happened?" Olivia asked, her forehead creasing deeply between her eyes.

"I don't know," he said, shaking his head. "I teased him this morning, saying that it was just a hangover. I should have known..."

She shook her head as well. "How could you have known, Walter?"

"Because that is how my son died."

The crease between Olivia's two eyes grew deeper as she scowled at the old man. "What do you mean? Peter isn't your son?"

Walter took the wet cloth away from Peter's forehead and held it, almost wringing it, in his hands. "He is Walter Bishop's only child, but he is not *my* child." He looked back up at Olivia. "Because he is not from *here*. That is what you saw last night, Olivia. You saw the truth that I've been hiding for the past 25 years."

"How, Walter. How can he be both your son and not?" Olivia glared angrily at him, her eyes demanding an answer.

Walter, looking 50 years older, sighed and placed the wet cloth on the table beside the bed. As he stood, he avoided direct eye contact with Olivia. "We should talk somewhere else. He may overhear us." With that, Walter walked to and out the door without looking to see if Olivia was following or not.

Alone in the room, Olivia again looked back at Peter's sweat soaked face. *This is how my son died*. Then how could he be here now? Unless Walter somehow managed to bring the dead back to life or...! The alternate universe. If there truly is more than one of everything, then maybe... Could he have been kidnapped, stolen from his parents, his own world without even realizing it. Olivia shook her head, anger flaring through her entire body. She had to know more, she had to understand *why* this was happening. Maybe then she could do something to stop it.