

Chapter 6: The Destination and Vision

Without knowing where she was going, Olivia ran down the hall toward the elevators. The moment she pressed the down button, she could have sworn she heard something, like someone whispered something quietly behind her. Turning around, however, she saw no one. It was just her in a dark, deserted hallway. Whatever she thought she heard was just her imagination.

When the elevator doors opened, she stepped anxiously inside. *There it is again*, she thought, *that feeling like someone's there, watching*. Although turning around, she only saw herself reflected in the mirror and nothing else. With a deep breath, she tilted her head, confounded. Normally the feeling would instill a heightened sense of danger, or perhaps trigger the flight or fight response. Still, this feeling was almost familiar, a pleasant feeling that seemed to calm her rapidly beating heart. Then before the elevator even reached the third floor, she heard the noise a third time. But this time it sounded like words whispered over a long distance.

“-via! -livia! Can you hear me?”

She turned around to see who spoke, but she was the only one in the elevator.

“If you can hear me, please tell me! Olivia!”

It couldn't be... could it?

“Peter?” she heard herself say, full well knowing that Peter wasn't in this world, nor was he in any condition to speak to her. Before Olivia had the chance to listen for an answer, the elevator doors opened at ground level. She couldn't just stay in the elevator, listening to voices that was more than likely a figment of her distraught mind. Taking a step from the elevator, she turned around to watch as the doors closed in silence. *Maybe the voice would try to speak again*, she thought.

However, it did not.

Shaking her head, Olivia sighed to herself. Why she was getting so upset over nothing? There was nothing in the hall with her, nothing physical to suggest that something or someone was there. She had so much yet to do, so much to accomplish, she couldn't afford to lose her mind at the beginning of her mission. She had to stay focused.

And so setting forth toward the entrance of the hospital, the thought occurred to her: *I have no car here!*

“Great, now what?” she said aloud.

“I guess you're stuck here with me,” said the voice.

There it was again, the voice, only this time she heard the words as clearly as though someone said them directly behind her. Her heart pounding twice as fast as it had been, she whirled around to spy who spoke to her, but as she discovered before, she was the only one in sight.

“You *can* hear me, can’t you? Thank God...”

She was losing her mind, hearing voices that did not exist except in her head. It was all the stress that she was under, worried about Peter, worried that she would be unable to master her ability to travel to the other universe and back safely, worried that the only thing that could save Peter would end up costing her life, or at least her life in another reality. Why should she care, though? That person wasn’t her. She could die and nothing would change in her world, except perhaps herself. How could one willingly choose death for yourself in another reality? Would she really be left unchanged...or perhaps something hidden deep within her would be irrevocably damaged in the process, forever changed? Just like Walter.

“C’mon, Olivia,” the voice of Peter said. “You can’t lose it now.”

At the sound of his voice, she raised a hand up to her chest, fearing her heart would burst from her chest at any moment. What should she do? All would be lost if she gave into her fears, her delusions. And yet there was something in the back of her mind that didn’t care about the risks—it just wanted to hear Peter’s voice again.

“Peter? Is that you?” she said, her eyes growing misty. She continued to look about the lobby but no one was there.

“Hey,” he said, as she felt something warm and tingly on the side of her right cheek. “It’s me. You don’t think I’d let you step into the other side alone, do you?”

It was him!

“Peter!” she said, her voice echoing loudly in the empty lobby. She wasn’t alone after all; he was there with her. Smiling, she shook her head. “How-how can I hear you? I just say you in the hospital room...”

“Yeah, I don’t get it either. I remember waking up in that room, then I went to find you and Walter.” Pausing awkwardly, he continued, his voice accusing, “What *was* that about, Olivia? The two of you. He was holding you pretty tightly...”

Was he there, when she let her emotions take control of her in those few moments of weakness? She had let herself go, let Walter comfort her as her world was crumbling around at her feet. A tear escaped from its prison in her eyes, recalling the shock and fear of Peter’s condition. Then she shook her head, grinning. If Peter

had seen her in Walter's arms, was he confused with what he had seen? Surely, he didn't think...

"We were worried about you, Peter—we still are."

"*You* were holding on to him pretty tightly, yourself. You wanna tell me what *that* was all about?"

And now he was interrogating her? Flicking the tear away with the back of her hand, somehow irritated and amused through it all, she said, "Is that jealousy I hear?"

Another pause.

Ha! He was! Jealous of his father being so close to her...! Unbelievable! she thought.

"Don't get your hopes up, Dunham," he said, sounding a bit agitated himself. "You still have to find that cure, or else no one can have me."

He always did have a dark sense of humor, Olivia thought. Maybe if Peter was here, he could help her find the cure. Maybe he'd know where to look!

"Peter, what do you know of the cure?"

He shouldn't have known anything about that. It was the other Peter who had been sick and dying. This Peter shouldn't have any memory even remotely related to the cure... He still didn't know that his spirit was again home, in the world in which he was born. Should she tell him?

"I don't know much, just that Walter was researching a cure to a type of flu that went extinct in the late 30's. I never understood why he was so obsessed over it, but I was just a kid. I was clueless about a lot of things back then."

A deep crease formed in the center of Olivia's forehead. Could he know something...? "How old were you, Peter, when you first heard of this?"

"Ten? Eleven, twelve? I don't know. Somewhere around there. My mother told me that is what caused Walter's mind to collapse, some crazy obsession over 'the cure.' She never told me what it was, though. A year or two later was when the accident in the lab happened, and you know what happened after that."

"Walter was sent to St. Clair's," Olivia said, trying to understand all of these jumbled and out-of-sequence events. Peter knew nothing of the cure before Walter's mental condition began to deteriorate. But why couldn't he remember anything about it before then...? "Are you sure you don't remember hearing anything about it before the accident in the lab?"

“I don’t know, there’s not much from that time I remember, anyway.”

“What do you mean?”

“I remember bits and pieces of things in my childhood, like playing with those little G.I. Joe figures. I remember I used to love—I mean—*love* dinosaurs, had them all over my walls. I was also facinated with space and stars, but besides that, I don’t remember much.”

“What about your mother? Do you remember anything about her from when you were little?” It didn’t occur to Olivia that the question sounded a little insensitive, but there was little time to waste on pleasantries.

“About mom?” Peter’s voice paused as though he were thinking. “I remember one time. I was sick in bed, and she came and showed me a cool trick with a silver coin. She said Walter wanted to show me how to do it, but he was always busy with his work, never had the time.” Again Peter paused, this time several seconds longer. “I don’t get it, I couldn’t remember any of this before. That’s why he was always gone, he was working on a cure. A cure for something, what was it? It started with an H.”

“Hepea,” Olivia said. “That’s the illness you had.”

“Hepea, yeah, that sounds right. How do you know that?”

“Peter, we have to find your father. Maybe he isn’t far from here...”

Olivia took a few bouncing steps toward the main entrance to the building before she heard Peter’s voice call for her. “Olivia, take a look at this.” Olivia turned around but when her eyes scanned all over the lobby, unsure what Peter was referring to since she couldn’t see him, he said, “Over here, behind the receptions desk.”

The receptions desk on this side was almost identical to that on the other when she first came to the hospital to ask for Peter’s room number. It was a large oak desk behind which two to three people could comfortably sit to help direct incoming guests. As Olivia walked behind the desk, she noticed two Dell desktop computers on the lower part of the desk, shielded from view of guests peering down. There was a discarded styrofoam coffee cup in a trash can all the way under the desk, near one of the chairs on wheels. There was also a pen and pad of paper next to the computer monitor. Besides that, she didn’t notice anything out of the ordinary.

“Not on the desk,” she heard Peter’s voice say. “Here, on the wall.”

The wall? she first thought, the thought of actually **turning around** not occurring to her.

“Turn around, Olivia. You’ll see it.”

Blinking confusedly, she set her eyes on a large computer screen embedded within the wall that displayed advertisements for medical supplies or even introduced some of the hospital’s staff and doctors. At the moment, the screen seemed to be locked on one particular doctor:

Walter Bishop, MD. , Rm. #1461
President-Elect, National Foundation for Infectious Diseases
Chairman, Department of Preventive Medicine,
Harvard University School of Medicine

“It’s Walter,” Olivia said, shocked yet somehow not. “So, he’s a medical doctor over here. Maybe we can get into his office and find out if he has any information on the cure.”

“Sounds like a plan,” Peter’s voice said. “Let’s go.”

Olivia felt something warm in her hand as she started to walk toward the elevators and giggled to herself. If only she could see his face right now...

Up on the 14th floor, they came to the room labeled #1461. It was the door to any other office, no special security device on the door, nothing that even suggested that the door could even be locked since there was no keyhole either.

“Let’s just poke around inside, shall we,” Olivia said as she pushed the handle of the door down to open it.

Peter chuckled. “Isn’t that my line?”

“Normally, yes,” Olivia said, her voice calm and steady. “But in your ghostly condition at present, your skills are a bit useless.”

“Useless, huh? Ouch. You do realize you’re talking to a dying person, right? You could be a little more—”

“—Shh, I think I hear someone.”

“Yeah, me—telling you to be a little more caring, maybe?”

“Peter, please. Be quiet.”

“Telling me to be quiet, now? Okay, fine. You know what? I’m gonna go wait outside. You do...whatever you need to do.”

The next moment as Olivia took the first steps into the office was silent. Apparently Peter had left. Why was he acting so sensitive all of a sudden, anyway? Maybe because he was just about to see an alternate Walter? How would that make him feel? Anxious to see a whole Walter with complete control over his mind? Pity for the broken Walter he had known since their reunion? Maybe it was better for Olivia to do this on her own.

The office was dark yet not without light, and strangely smelled of smoke. The area she stood in was surrounded by several chairs along the walls as though this was used as a waiting area. A large counter table was along the wall in front of her which blocked the hallway that went further into the back rooms of the office. There was a large, metal trashcan next to the counter that smelled of smoke and ash. As she bent her knees to get a closer look, she reached her hand inside and noticed that the ash was still slightly warm.

Then as she stood to her feet again, she stepped lightly on the hard floor to mute her footsteps, walking down the hall toward the light past several doors on either side. The light she saw came from a room at the end of the hall, the door left wide open. With little time for proper introductions, Olivia knocked on the side of the door.

“Excuse me, Dr. Bishop?”

The Walter Bishop of this world sat at an old wooden desk—much like a primary school teacher’s desk—with a single capped, glass vile in his hand. His eyes seemed distant, as though he had been thinking of something deeply and for a long time. He reacted very little to Olivia’s unannounced visit.

“What do you want?” he said, heartlessly, his eyes never leaving the vile in his hand.

“Dr. Bishop, I’ve come for your assistance. You are the Chairman for the Department of Preventive Medicine, from Harvard.”

“And you are very observant. The screen downstairs has been stuck on my slide for the past 23 hours.”

“Dr. Bishop, I’m sorry to intrude at such a late hour, but I was wondering if you could help me with my own research. I’m trying to find anyone who might know about disease called Hepea.”

At the sound of the name, Walter’s cold eyes met with Olivia’s. “What do you know of that?”

“Just that I have been studying the disease, trying to find a cure.”

“And you will be unsuccessful,” Walter said harshly. With the vile of blue liquid in his hand, he stood and absently walked toward the large window looking down at the city of Boston below. “There hasn’t been a documented case of Hepea since the late 1930’s. In order to synthesize a cure, an untainted sample of the virus must be preserved.”

“Which I believe has been preserved, in this very hospital. There is an agent downstairs infected with this very virus, isn’t there?”

Walter was silent for many seconds, nearly a minute, as he stared out the window. Then for whatever reason, he spoke his mind without much concern for holding on to secrecy.

“The girl downstairs, they said she became infected with virus when a sample of it was being transported here. She was quickly put under quarantine. She has but hours to live without the cure,” Walter said coldly.

“She was used,” Walter said, continuing his story like an uncaring narrator. “Manipulated by the government. They feared another outbreak, you see, and called upon me to resurrect my research from 25 years ago to manufacture the cure. I knew, however, what they intended—they weren’t concerned for that poor girl who was infected merely because she was doing her job. They wanted her to get sick so they would have due cause to have the cure made in quantity... quantity enough to ensure the survival of their forces.”

“Biological warfare?” Olivia said, putting the pieces together. What would happen if this strain of the virus was unleashed in her world, a world with no known cure? Would it be the Petrol incident all over again?

“That is why I destroyed the formula. All that’s left of the cure is in this single vile. Without it, they cannot use the virus as a weapon.”

“But the agent...?”

“She is but one, miss. One verses billions of lives.”

No! If Walter destroyed the cure, Peter in the other universe would die, the other Olivia would die.

And maybe he was right. Maybe if the cure was made, maybe it could be used in the advancement of a biological weapon. That was always the way of things. A powerful discovery is made for the good of all mankind just for the weak minded few in power to abuse it. How many things in this world might change by her meddling in the course a life was meant to take? Was Peter meant to have died when he was seven? Was that a mistake? Was he supposed to live? Again, she felt like she was swimming in an ocean only gods ought to touch.

She came near the man at the window, touched his hand and held it fast. "You can't destroy that," she said firmly.

Walter peered at her with such piercing eyes, she was caught off guard. She had never seen such determination and cold insensitivity in them before.

"And who are you to tell me what I must and must not do?"

She had to give him a reason, but only one came to mind. "She is my sister. I can't lose her," she said, her voice strangely unsteady. Perhaps he could hear it.

Squinting his eyes darkly as he stared Olivia down, he tried to peel back the layers of lies from the truth hidden inside. "You do look like her," he said, "a little too much? Is she your twin or...?"

"Yes," she answered quickly as to not allow Walter's deducing mind enough time to work things out. "She is my identical twin, that is why I can't let you destroy the cure that will save her."

Walter stared into Olivia's adamant eyes. "I can see that this cure means a lot to you, but it's not for your sister. That would look entirely different in your eyes, voice. Why do you really want this cure so badly?"

She couldn't hide it, he was too observant, his eyes too keen. But still, could she trust him? Could she tell him that she knew what happened to his son, that she knew him, that she was trying everything she could to save him? There was nothing she could say that would get him on her side... and if her Walter made a doorway, then what would stop this Walter from doing the same? What if he tried to right the wrong from so long ago...?

Without another moment wasted, she withdrew her gun. "Give it to me now."

"Who are you?" Walter said, his eyes glaring with angry fire.

"I'm with the FBI and I need you to pass me the vile, slowly and carefully."

"Your badge?"

"The vile first."

"A gun in my face does not scare me, miss. And I would gladly die to save the future if I must." He took the vile with bright blue liquid in his hand as though he was about to shatter it in his grasp.

So force wasn't going to work...

“Even if it could save your son’s life?”

She didn’t want to say anything, she didn’t want to upset yet another life that had already learned to move on, but she had no choice.

“What do you know of my son?!” His hand with the vile shook with the intensity of his anger. “Tell me! What do you know about my son?”

“He is sick,” Olivia said, carefully choosing her words. “We believe he is in the final stages of Hepea... He will die if he does not receive the cure that you made.”

“You know him?” Walter’s eyes softened, showing the first hint of an emotion other than anger. “Where is he? I want to see him.”

Of course he wanted to see him. It had been 25 years since Peter mysteriously disappeared from this world, but it was an impossible request.

“I’m sorry. I can’t do that, I wish I could.”

“Do you? Do you know what it’s like to lose a child? To put him safely in bed at night only to find it empty in the morning? Do you know what it’s like to wonder, to need to know what happened, to feel yourself losing control—your sanity—trying to put the pieces together?”

She couldn’t understand what it was like. There was nothing she could do to change anything, nothing she could do to take away his pain. She simply held on to her gun, threatening to get what she wanted. “There’s nothing I can say that will make any of this better. But you have to believe me. Peter is dying.”

“And so he shall because I cannot give you this, even at the cost of my own son’s life.”

It was the standstill, the wall dividing the two sides of negotiations, that she feared. She could feel her heart pounding in her throat as she swallowed hard. How strong this Walter was, to find out his son was still alive and to still put his life on the line—a single casualty as opposed to how many would die if the virus and cure were used for war.

There was nothing she could do to avoid a physical confrontation with the man, but with the gun in her hand, she couldn’t act quickly, so she thought perhaps faking him out would work. Lowering her weapon, she slowly put it back in its holster and paused to give Walter a false sense of security.

In one swift motion, Olivia kicked Walter in the gut with her high heeled shoe, violently shoving him backward into the wall as the vile clinked to the floor. Olivia

sprang toward it, but Walter was faster, his hand raised up to her waist and gripped her gun. Face to face, they both froze.

“Get back,” Walter said, holding the gun in his left hand while the other secured the vile again.

“Olivia, get out of there! Leave the vile and run,” Olivia heard Peter’s voice say.

She shook her head. “No, I can’t let you die, I won’t.”

Walter looked at Olivia’s seriously drawn face at the opposite end of the gun and scowled at her words. It was as though... “Who are you talking to?” he said.

There was no way Olivia could explain the voice she heard. What could she say? ‘It’s the voice of your missing son!’ He would think her more crazy than... the Walter she had come to know in her world.

But she didn’t need to say anything because a moment later, Walter’s eyes opened wide as though he had just seen a ghost. A foggy image of a person appeared between Olivia and the old man, and she knew right away who it was, even though the distance between them blurred his image.

“Who are you?” Walter said, aiming the weapon at the misty figure. There was something familiar in those green eyes...

“Walter, put the gun down,” Peter said, holding up his arms.

“Answer me! Who are you? Where did you come from?”

He didn’t know the truth to tell Walter, Olivia thought, panicking.

“I’m your son,” Peter said, “but I’m not from this world. There’s another, like this place, but different. That’s where I come from.”

Walter frowned at the news, not knowing whether to believe his eyes or not. Could this be his long, lost son? Or maybe his son from another reality? He knew it could be possible, probable even. Before he knew it, Walter’s hand holding the gun fell to his side, tears streaming down his face.

“Son! Peter!” he stepped closer to the shimmering form of Peter and tried to touch his face but his hand only touched empty space, which caused the tears to flow even more. “What *happened* to you? Why are you like this?”

Peter sadly shook his head. He never felt more helpless, his life so out of control. “Walter, what Olivia said is true. I’m dying.”

“No. No! I just found you, my son! I will not let you go!” Walter said, his voice oddly similar to the other Walter. “What’s wrong with you? Is it Hepea again?”

Peter couldn’t respond but Olivia answered for him, “Yes. That is why I’ve come to find the cure. You are the only one who can save him.”

But the threat of what the cure meant was still ever present, his own words echoing in the back of his mind. Walter responded, “The cure must be destroyed...”

“That’s fine,” Olivia said. “But please, let me save Peter first, then I promise I will destroy it, you have my word.”

Walter paused, clearly thinking the matter over. How many lives would he sacrifice in the name of saving his only son? For all he knew this wasn’t even his son. “What of the agent downstairs? She will die instead.”

There was nothing Olivia could say. Peter glanced behind him at Olivia, confused. “What agent? Someone else has Hepea here?”

She didn’t want to tell Peter that it was she who was dying of Hepea in this world. She didn’t want to tell him that if they took the cure from this world now, the Olivia Dunham of this world would die. She didn’t want Peter to know that she was willing to end that girl’s life if it meant that Peter could live. She didn’t want Peter to look at her with the same eyes he always looked at his father. She didn’t want to be seen as a desperate person playing God to get what he wanted.

But then suddenly Walter raised the vile up to his eyes and held it there in a shaking hand, seeing both death and life spelled out in the blue liquid. “Take it and go,” he said, offering Olivia the blue vile. “Save him, please.”

Taking the vile in her hand, she sighed deeply and traded glances again with the ghostly form of Peter. But before either of them could say anything, the ground was violently pulled out from underneath their feet as the tiles and mortar from the ceiling and walls fell upon them. The vile slipped from Olivia’s hand and shattered against the jagged floor, spilling its contents all over the rubble. Both Walter and Olivia were knocked unconscious from the force, but Peter was still there, standing in disbelief as Olivia’s shirt and part of her jacket soaked up the last of the cure.