

## VISIONS

When I woke up, I was told that Cody had become worse over night. There was some question if he would even pull through. His condition had been fairly consistent since my arrival. I had no idea what had precipitated the change.

A couple of specialists had been flown in from St. Louis. I couldn't even get near the room. Obviously, there would be no need for my services. I didn't want to go back to my room. I hung around the living room in the hopes that I might hear something. All kinds of people were coming in and out of the house. Some were helping the doctors. But there were others here to see Lee. I had no idea what was going on.

I was totally shaken up. This all seemed so sudden. When I left him yesterday evening, everything was all right. I wondered if I had missed something. I reviewed our time together. Nothing should have made him more excited than usual. I understood that this was probably something internal that had finally taken its toll.

I tried to get near the room. But it was impossible. Lee saw me and motioned me back to my room. He made it appear as if he would come talk to me later.

There was no mistaking what was going on. Even if they were doing what they could to help, it was obvious that Cody was near the end. It hit me like a brick wall. There was no way of escaping this.

I had all kinds of questions. My confusion was both for Cody and for myself. I wondered what it would really be like to lose him. I shouldn't have depended on any of this hanging on like this. It had to end some time. It was just an illusion to believe that he was going to make it back.

Cody had quit life a long time ago. His body did what it could to hang on. Since the accident, the man was no longer there. Lee didn't want to give up. And he had convinced me to hop aboard his plan. We were the only ones who had any real hope. The nurse did her job. The doctor was realistic. And Helen had already faced the truth.

Obviously, they had no need for my services. I hadn't been discharged permanently. But it was unlikely that I would again be reading to Cody. Where was I supposed to go? This was hardly the time to wonder about myself.

"Did you really think that anything that you did mattered in the least?"

I really thought that I was doing wonders for Cody. All that I had been doing was reading some books. What would words do? I felt as if I was losing my one remaining faith. My craft had run aground. When I read to Cody, I saw through the eyes of visionaries. I reached a vantage point where I could affect all the great forces of the universe. Now, I had trouble walking. I had been stopped in my tracks. Nothing.

Maybe I had been using Cody to make up for something that had become messed up in my own life. Sure, working here had solved a lot of those problems. But only temporarily. What kind of life was it to spend all my time with a sick man? There were never any signs of improvement. I was only nurturing my own fantasies.

I had enough problems with my own family. Why did I want to attach myself to this stranger. Lee had remained on the outskirts of my life. But what did he really have prepared. This would be the perfect time to get out. I could make a final settlement, make my peace, and

slip out for good. Besides, what different was going to happen? I wasn't here to witness a resurrection. Cody was gone.

After the first day of treatment, Lee sat us all down to tell us what we pretty well already knew. The prognosis by the physicians was not good. Lee was not expected to last very many more days. Helen had come in town to be with her husband. A number of other relatives were also there. As well, business associates and mysterious friends of Lee's were also there. Lee introduced me to everyone. He was not entirely specific about my duties, but he noted how I had helped a great deal. I would continue to be of service as I was needed. The atmosphere was very somber. It was difficult to take so many people assembled here together.

I wasn't going to be allowed to go into the room. No one was. They were able to get Helen in there for a very brief visit. And then the craziness took over again. I walked by the room and tried to look in. But I didn't want to get caught so I went back to my room. The suspense was spinning me around. We all were ready for some news. But we didn't want to hear anything bad. So we were constantly on tenterhooks.

This was all too dramatic for me. I was getting caught up in the whirlwind. I needed to settle down. I wasn't eating. I could have used a drink, but I didn't want to upset the vibe. I felt as if I was in church. I was surprised that a minister hadn't been called. There would be that time.

I had been so close to Cody, Now I was being excluded. I again felt like a child. I was outside looking in. It made me feel more helpless. It was as if Cody was my patient. And he had been taken from me. I felt that explained his worsening situation. I knew what to do. They did not.

Who was I kidding? I had wrapped my life around this guy. It had given meaning to all the questions that I had about myself. He was part of my family. Now, I was being reminded that I was not part of the family. I was again an orphan.

Where was I supposed to go—back to my room. This was what they did to little kids. I hardly felt jealous. But I did feel excluded. I wanted my part in what was happening. Besides, I felt that I knew better for Cody.

The longer that this continued, the more that I felt that I was no part of Cody's world. There would be a point where it would almost be as if none of this happened. Maybe Lee would like this. I would no longer be a rival for Cody's attention. I needed to find a trump card that I could play in my favor.

I couldn't let this happen. I was getting trapped by my own pettiness. This was not about me at all. I needed to help Cody the best that I could. I needed to let go. His doctors were doing the best for him. It was not my place to interfere.

I wish that I had some secret that I could share that would make things better for him. I could reveal to them what I knew. They would all be excited that I had revealed something important.

All that I had were my emotions. I was at wit's end. I was freaked out. This was more than I could take. I couldn't let it get to me. If they needed me, they would call. At this point, there was no reason for me to get in the way. Sure I was curious, but they all had work to do. They didn't need another hand in there trying to spoil things.

In teaching Cody, I felt that I was moving closer to a deeper understanding of the body. I

had linked together philosophy and biology. I had discovered an awareness of the physical universe. I had explored metaphysics. Why didn't they need my insight? I knew Cody Brainerd. I needed to let go. This really had nothing to do with me. What was I supposed to do: forget that it all had happened?

I went to my room and started to read a book. I could barely concentrate. My life was again under siege. My heart went out to Cody. But I never really knew the man. It was all on invention on my part. I would never have the opportunity to know him

Cody was near death, but I was letting my own problems get in the way. I felt selfish. So what. He wasn't my father. There was nothing that connected us. There was no reason that anyone had to show me any loyalty. I had been doing a job. Sure, I enjoyed what I was doing. I got all wrapped up in it. And I was very sympathetic to Cody. But all that didn't amount to much of anything.

I didn't want to appear heartless, but I did need to distance myself from Cody and his world. I had been on a journey. And this was a detour. This was someone else's story. I needed someone to give me meaning. But I couldn't steal Cody's life and call it my own. This was the best time to separate. And this would also be the best way. There were going to be no painful good byes. It would be just like one of my books. I'd finish it, and I would close the book for good. So long Cody.

That seemed way too final. I couldn't tell that to anyone else. But it was how things were. Cody was not my flesh. He was barely flesh and blood to me. I hadn't made him part of my heart. I could turn my back on him, and that would be that.

I couldn't go back home. But I could feel the pressure on me mounting. I had no home. There was only a vague idea in my head. I didn't want to settle down. I didn't want to find new parents. I wanted to live.

Being with Cody had helped me answer so many of my questions. But all that was artificial. I was like the reader for story hour at the library. The children could all delight in the wonderful stories. But it was all make-believe. I wasn't the Pied Piper. I couldn't take the children with me. I had to live as an adult. I needed to say good bye.

I gripped my book. It told me something about who I really was. I was learning about the world. Cody had been a great help. But it was only part of my development. I had learned my lesson. I could progress to the next stage. It all sounded so cold. But I never had the opportunity for it to be any different.

I wanted to stay strong. I wasn't going to give in to my feelings. I had always been independent. When I left home, I didn't weep for June. I had no regrets. I didn't want to appear cruel. But if I broke down, I would have no hope on the road. That was all part of my resolve in leaving. I had to let go of any attachments. I struggled with my emotions. But when I made the break, that was that. I needed to do the same with regards to Cody.

I sat on the side of the bed. It was as if I was planning to do something. I felt queasy all over. I was getting sick. I felt nauseous. I did my best to relax, And then the feeling passed. None of this had anything with my personality. It was just a passing feeling. I wouldn't let it affect. I had to maintain my composure.

Why had my life been so absent of any real feelings? I wanted to be a part of something. I was willing to give as much of myself as I could. I just didn't want to get lost in all the fake

stuff. June made such a big deal about family. But she did everything that she could to exile me from her world. All her sentiment was phony. It was a front so that everybody thought that she was perfect. She wasn't. And she used her emotions to such people in. I rejected that attitude. I retreated to my cocoon. It felt warm and comfortable inside. If I seemed cold to others, that was their perception. They didn't know me. They couldn't know me. I was still freaking out. I couldn't calm down.

I walked around the house. I was all nervous. I wanted to find out something. It was really getting to me. All it took was a memory and I went off. I went back to my room. I was crying uncontrollably. I felt as if I felt a deep love for Cody. I was losing my father. This was so tragic. I never had a chance to know him.

I didn't want my sadness to overcome. I needed to get out of my room. I needed to get out of the house.

It was a rainy day. I tried I could to dart between the rain drops. The weather reflected what was going on in the house. Everything donned a state of mourning. The rain shook me back to my senses. It was cold. I needed to go back in.

Inside, I regrouped. I did what I could to get my feelings under control. I needed to calm down. I went back to my room and lay down on the bed. I closed my eyes. I was being tossed back and forth. I tried to settle my discomfort.

Each time that I would almost fall asleep, I would come to. I needed to take a nap. I tried to put it all out of my mind. I relaxed completely.

After I had slept, I felt groggy. The sad feelings were no longer so dominant. But I had this deep pang of fear. What was happening to Cody was real? My dreams couldn't spin it in a new way. I wanted to get deeper into a meditative state. I wanted to enter a world where none of this touched me at all.

Although I had subdued my sorrow, I was still in a daze. I wandered around the house not knowing what I should do. I checked my self to see if I was about to break down again. The wave of fear and melancholy had passed. But I had no idea what I was supposed to be doing.

I was jumpy as hell. I was a little irritable. I didn't want to talk to anybody. I just had these feelings that I couldn't keep to myself. I needed Rose. I needed someone.

As I was walking down the hallway, one of the physicians stopped me.

"You look pretty messed up. Is there anything that I can give you to help you quiet down."

"I think that I'm OK."

"It's all right to unload. Don't be afraid of your feelings. I know it's tough. I have a daughter of my own. She's probably your age. Just starting college. And she calls me whenever she feels down."

"I'm just not sure."

He looked understanding, "This is a lot to think about. You shouldn't have to do this all by yourself."

I told him what I did. He became interested in what I had learned about Cody. He was impressed by my thoughts on education. We talked about the relationship between the mind and the body. We talked about the idea of willing ourselves back to health.

"Cody is one strong man. If he was conscious, perhaps he could use his will to focus all

his resources. But that is simply conjecture. As a doctor, I know that I can't count on the will. But as a human being, I realize that is the greatest remedy that we have.

We both smiled. I needed his comfort.,

"I'm going to work it out."

' "Tell me if there's anything that I can do."

He went back to Cody's room. And I went to get some lunch.

After eating, a new calm washed over me. I wanted to do all that I could to help. But I was not the one who was dying. I needed to collect myself.

As long as he was hanging on, they wanted someone in the room with Cody. I hated the feeling that I was engaged in a death watch. I had sat in this room extensively without the trace of a morbid thought. I was able to pretend that there was an alert individual sitting across from me. But no more. He seemed barely here. And the only reminder that he was still here were the flashing monitors. They almost promised some kind of liberation. I continued to want to believe that they would herald a miracle. I hated the reality that was staring me in the face. If I closed my eyes, I could tell myself that things were indeed different. But the electronic beeps spoke the melancholy truth.

I wasn't here to raise the dead. All my magic was being put to its final test. Medical experts had all applied their considerable skills in the hopes that they could make something happen. All their tricks had been little more than the superstitious fumbling of a disgraced charlatan. They could observe his vital signs as a way to predict his end. But they ultimately realized that it was all out of their hands. They had commended his mortal soul to a higher power.

My watch became more taxing. If Cody had nothing more to give, then I felt these machines were draining the life from me. This was no kind of simple exchange. It wasn't as if I was giving blood to make the man feel better. The reaper was being paid double for his efforts. Worse, death's hunger knew no limit. We would all be caught up and destroyed in the onslaught. The tide had burst its dams and was rolling over all of us.

We were surely in a morgue where there would be no raising of the dead. I petitioned whatever reluctant spirits that might be hiding in our midst to provide us with some kind of rescue. Even if they could do nothing for Cody, they could at least free the rest of us from our obsession. My powerlessness informed me how useless all my work had been. I truly felt that I was creating the man from the ground up. If his coma had been induced by a surrender before his most profound weaknesses, I was offering the man fortification. My despair was ever greater. My task had been completely selfless. But I didn't want to feel completely wiped out. I needed something to show for my efforts.

Cody may have allowed the circumstances to get the better of him. But I did not want to see myself as a martyr. If I needed to get out to save myself, I needed to detach myself from whatever ties I had created. I did not have a death wish. Although I could identify with his struggle, I did not want to go down with the man.

The pressure that I felt was extraordinary. I was being tortured by what was happening. I was still a kid, and they were sucking my youth from me. This feeling was already cutting me from the inside. I would be carrying this burden around with me wherever I would go. If Lee had intended to toy with me, he could not have done a better job. Certainly, this was a

tough time for him. And it do not seem if my recruitment has been intentional. Nevertheless , there was something entirely sinister about the man. Even when he was trying to be hospitable, he seemed to be doing the devil's bidding. For now, I accepted my stalemate with Lee. If we were going to close shop, so be it. I would fade into the restless night.

I had been here for a while. I needed my relief.

I felt an incredible let down. I had given too much of myself to this man and my efforts to revive him. As hard as it was, I needed to put these feelings behind me.

If Cody was making his peace with death, I needed to respect his wishes. My heart was with him. That was all that I could do. I felt this incredible hollow. I needed to let go. I needed to find myself.

Although Cody had appeared to stabilize even more, there was still little hope. Over the past few days his condition had deteriorated. There was some uncertainty about the situation. Cody could go in a couple of days. Or he could last a few weeks. No one knew. Many of the assembled had begun to disperse. Helen left with the idea of returning when she was needed. She had been through this before.

It would hardly be accurate to say that things had returned to normal. But the crisis did not seem so imminent. I wasn't expected to go back to reading to Cody. But they did want to maintain the watch. Seeing as there were fewer people in the house, it was expected that I would be spending the most time with him. I still had my trusty books with me. But I was no longer reading to him.

I had the strangest feeling that he was lonely without me talking to him. Although I didn't actually read to him, I did talk to him about the books that I was reading. Occasionally, I would quote from a book. That way he felt more involved.

There were times that I felt I was conducting a religious service. I would read from the hymnal. Then I would offer my blessing. This gave a sense of solemnity to my work. I was casting out the demons. Lee might have been really afraid if he knew what I was doing. But I carried on.

I wanted to believe that it was making a difference. From day to day, nothing changed. The doctors weren't running in the room panicking. I wanted to believe that it could stay like this forever. But we had passed a point of no return. We weren't going to fix him and make him better. All that could be done was keep him like this. We would eventually have to give up.

Each evening that I left him, I assume that I would be back in the morning.

"We're all prepared for him to go," Lee wanted to accustom me to the inevitable.

"I figure as much."

"We'll take care of you as long as we can. You've done a great job. We want to reward you for your work.

"I appreciate that."

Lee's pep talk sent a chill through me. Sure, I knew that we were coming to the end. But I didn't want things pushed along. I needed to drag it out as long as I could.

The day after Lee's talk, I paid special attention to Cody's condition. I wanted some clearer signs of what was going on. It would have been great to consult with a doctor. But all the specialists had been sent home. And Cody's regular physician was only on call. The nurse had the standard information, and that was all.

Since I lacked more detail, I relied on my own intuition. I did my best to find a glimmer of hope. It was all too overwhelming. I wanted to believe that Cody could make it. So I was seeing things how I would like them to be. Every breath, every twitch meant something. There had been a times when I would have dismissed a lot of this noise. But everything had become significant. I even thought that I had a special knowledge that had been denied to the doctors. I paid extra attention to the monitors with the idea that I was noticing a pattern, I got into an in-depth conversation with the nurse. I read up some medical texts and looked for information on the internet. I thought that I was on the verge of a solution.

Since things had become so desperate, I was looking for the miracles which I had formerly ignored. I was going to make something happen. I thought about touching him again. Sure, I might mess things up. But it just might work. I reached across the bed to grab his arms. I thought that he jumped,

"What are you doing?"

My imagination was really playing tricks on me.

I felt a tremor. I was sure of it. The twitching became more pronounced. I had really messed things up. I was afraid that I was going to lose him here and now. And it would be my fault. But nothing happened after that. I went back to sitting in my chair.

That had been a close call. I didn't want to be the one to send him over the edge. But we needed to accelerate things. If he was going to go, so be it. But maybe I could still help, I believed that I could make something good happen.

The rest of the evening was more of the kind of activity with which I had become accustomed. I was seeing things that weren't there. It gave me a false hope.

I returned to my room. Maybe things had changed. I stopped feeling so discouraged. This was my familiar cycle. My doubts would get the best of me. I would descend to the depths of depression. Then I would see a spark of light. I would cast off my feelings of dejection. I would renew my belief in what I was doing. The more that I built myself up, the more that I knew that I was headed for another fall.

I reviewed the scare of the last couple of days. One more like this, and we would be done. We were running out of chances. There was only so much resilience left in that the frail body.

The next day, I noticed that one of the expert physician had returned. It was the one who talked to me. I was about to walk in the room when I noticed that he was there.

"Come on in. It's OK. I just about finished. Lee told me about you."

We talked about Cody's condition.

"Sometimes there are these random movements. It's nothing to be frightened of. It doesn't have anything to do with any change in his condition."

"Is he going to live?"

"I'm not a fortune teller. That he's lasted this long is a testament to something inside. And we still haven't figured out what caused the severe relapse. I don't know. We've done all we can. I don't want to bring you down. But I don't want to give you a false hope."

Really, I wondered if the news could be any worse.

"I guess that I'm looking for a miracle worker."

"That's only natural. I'd love to reach into my bag and pull out a miracle. I just didn't

bring that bag with me today.”

I smiled.

“You should cheer up. You never know if it’s going to help.”

“I’ve tried a million times to hypnotize him awake. I’ve talked to him into the night.”

“Lee never told me that you were a hypnotist.”

“If I am, I seem to be failing.”

“We have all done everything that we can. After that, it’s all about faith. Sometimes, your desires aren’t meant to be. That doesn’t diminish their importance. You shouldn’t be afraid to give of yourself. I know that you don’t want to be disappointed. I’m not going to tell you that it just part of life. But you learn. We all die a little bit every day. That’s not meant to be morbid. It’s the way that things are.”

I wanted to be a mind reader. I wanted to get inside Cody and figure out what was needed to bring him around. I wanted to keep on with our journey. There was so much more to learn. I was ready to pick up another book.

Everything progressed pretty much the same way for the next few days. Lee went about his business. He was even away from the house for protracted periods of time. One evening when I was alone in the house, Cody started to act up. The next thing that I knew, he was talking to me. This time, it wasn’t my imagination. I was sure of it.

It was weird hearing Cody speak. I had never heard his voice before. It was so strange, almost alien

“Imagine if the sky was so toxic that it was flammable. Simple static electricity could set it off. Man believed that it was in his final days. In such times, people become desperate. They’d kill a neighbor for a crust of bread. They want answers. And it is going to take a special soul to keep everyone from losing their mind.”

His diatribe was sheer lunacy. But I was fascinated.

“Out of this darkness, salvation emerges. He is a poet. He is a prophet. He is the solution. He gives people comfort. He helps them see the light. He tells people not to fear themselves. He speaks in a language that they can understand. Even though the world is going to hell, they feel that they have escaped with their respectability. He gives meaning to people’s lives. He gives them back their dignity.”

Everything that he said was so general and vague. I wanted him to give me a clearer idea what he was talking about.

“The time will come. He will speak with the same genius as the snake’s rattle. His words are a warning. He will tell us what we need to do to mend our ways. He will tell wayward woman to return to their families. He will tell lustful men to quit following their appetite. He will tell the thieves to give back the money that they stole.”

He thought that he was revealing a great truth. He was simply saying the obvious. But his words had a bellowing tone. I tried to talk back to him. He did not hear me. He was in a dream world. I couldn’t do anything to reach him.

“I can see him rising like a tree that is rooted in the ground. It reaches out for all to see. It tries to touch the sky.”

Would anyone believe such a visionary? It was almost as if Cody saw himself as this prophetic soul. I felt as if my questions could reveal the source of his feelings. But he kept



ignoring me. How could I ever verify any of this mumbo jumbo?

“On the last day of forever, he will reveal his plan for all of us?”

“Why do we have to wait that long? What are we supposed to do now?”

Even if I spoke total nonsense to him, he would appear to answer me.

“And the day after forever, it will all begin anew. The fires will burn in a ring around the world. Those who are not protected themselves will perish.”

“Is this going to happen literally? Or are you only using a parable to help us understand?”

“And the burning bodies will cure of us of the plague. And what rot remains will be the foundation of a new people.”

“How is that?”

Cody was trying to pitch a myth of renewal and redemption. He was making it up as he went along. Could it ever have a connection to anything real?

“You will see what you want to see. You will believe what you want to believe. But you will not be able to touch the center of the universe. And until you do, your seeing will amount to nothing. Heaven is the here and now because only the truly damned know that they are going nowhere.”

He sat back in his bed and look exhausted. He had given the sermon of a lifetime even if it was full of silliness. I wanted to help. He never heard a word that I said. I was sure that no one would have believed what I just saw. Was this his last gasp? I had no idea. I kept looking at him hoping for more. The show was done for tonight.

I needed a witness to what had happened. But if you looked at Cody, there would be no reason to expect that things had changed. How could I prove what I had seen. I couldn't. I was getting more and more desperate.

“Cody, I need you to talk to everyone else.”

He didn't say a thing. He wasn't going to speak to me again. For the next few days, I did what I could to bring him back. Again nothing! It wasn't meant to be. I wanted to hear more of his prophecy. What was so weird was the fact that his words seemed so powerful even while he made no sense. He could sell hope to a dying man. If he was so convincing, why couldn't he bring himself back.

I started to read to him again. That hadn't been the cause of his speech. But it might make some kind of difference. I wasn't going to quarrel with fate. If there was some magic in store for me tonight, I'd take it in handfuls. I needed to figure out some way to get through this. I was going back and forth and back and forth. He was teasing me. If he was going to come back, he needed to do it now.

“Cody, I want you to wake up right now.”

He didn't even move. He was again ignoring me. What had happened a few days ago shook me up all over again. It was some kind of strange occurrence that had come over him. He had been performing for me. But he never responded to me at all. He was trying to tell me something. He wanted to get to me.

I tried to convince myself that it wasn't something about me. I had had those terrible dreams. I really felt that an intruder was in the house. I never had any hallucinations, but I felt as if I was walking that fine line. The world seemed to give off a glow. If the luster became more intense, it would vibrate. That's where it stopped. But it was really eerie. I could sense that

there was a whole world just beyond my horizon. And it almost reached for me. I felt unstable in its presence.

There were times when I already questioned my balance. I felt lucky as if someone was there watching out for me. Without that anchor, I would slide into the depths. This was not some crazy scenario like Cody described. This was real shit. This was the limits of our personality. This was ultimately the reason why my nightmares had seemed so completely unnerving. They reminded me of something in my everyday life. I had these encounters with this otherness. It was so uncanny. I couldn't cross over to the other side. But the way that the form made itself known to me caused me to think that I had a whole other life that I had not yet uncovered. That was why I doubted my life with June and Bill. That had all been a fabrication so that I could deal with the present. And if I peeled back all those layers, there would be something there.

When I imagined that I lived with Bill and June, things were not right. There were parts of my world that weren't filled in completely. Now, even those moments of reality that I recollected were only partial. It was just like a dream. When I was in it, it all seemed so real. I had no doubts about any of the parts. But I could only reach into the void so deeply before I would completely escape my reality. The front that I had created seemed much more potent than the background story that Bill and June offered me.

Cody was putting up his own front. It didn't seem as if it would be that difficult to break it down. I had all the cards in my hand. It would take only a little push.

"Hello, everybody."

"Cody?"

He tried to sit up. I wanted to call the nurse. I wanted to call someone.

"It's been a while. I need a drink."

I handed him some water.

"No, a real drink. Some scotch."

"Seriously?"

He smiled.

"Where am I?"

"You're in your room."

Just as surely as he was talking to me, he went out again like a light. Again more strangeness. This time was different. Again, this could have been one of his last attempts to come back to life before throwing in the towel for good.

I kept secret my night visitor. It was going to stay that way. As I got ready for bed, I understood how difficult this was becoming. When I had few signs of his recovery, it was easy to dismiss my over-confidence. This time, it was different. There had been too much evidence to ignore. He was trying to come back.

The next day, I wanted to wake up to more good news. It simply was not going to be like that. Again the doctors didn't hold much hope. Things had gotten a little worse. They were again in a death watch.

"Sorry, kid. This may be it. Time to pack up."

I didn't want to pack up. There were tears in my eyes. I went back to my room. I went for a walk in the hopes of clearing my head.

A couple of days later, I woke up and everyone was scurrying around. Something was going on. I was prepared for the worse.

“I don’t know what happened. He’s been talking. He’s still a little delirious. But he seems to be coming back. Even his signs are improving.”

Lee was excited. He still was holding back. And he didn’t want to say too much to me.

“Are you sure?”

“Sure as I can be.”

That was all. There was no big miracle. He wasn’t walking around the house. But he was awake. It took a while before I was able to see him. And it wasn’t as if he really knew who I was. But he seemed appreciative. I felt that I would get a chance to know him better.

Things were again in jeopardy. But in a different way. They didn’t need me to look in on him. This was barely my story anymore. I could have just headed out into the night. But Lee seemed to want to talk to me about something. I wasn’t going to make big plans. I was simply going to take things as they came.

I kept playing the waiting game. I did what I could to be allowed to see him. I think that I expected a lot more to happen. It didn’t. There was no real drama.

They began a program of rehabilitation. For a while Lee considered that it might be good for me to start reading to him again. It would help get him ready for the outside world. But he quickly changed his mind without much explanation. I did have the opportunity to see Cody. Unfortunately, he was often resting when I went on by. I did what I could.

I hadn’t been cast out yet. Lee’s coldness upset me. But he had a lot to plan. I didn’t want to feel that I was in the way. It just wasn’t my show.