

Summary: A controversial scientist uses the hospital lawyer as a guinea pig in her secret research. What will become of the lonesome lawyer and the secret growing beneath his heart?  
Categories: [Chicago Hope](#) Characters: Dr. Billy Kronk, Dr. Daniel Nyland, Dr. Keith Wilkes, Dr. Phillip Watters, Ensemble, Gregory Deck (OC), Jeffrey Geiger, Judge Aldrich (OC), Marion Dreyford (OC), Original Character(s), Other Female, Other Male

Genres: Gen

Warnings: Aggression, Angst, Attempted Murder, Birth, Birth - Explicit, Blood, Brain-Insane, Christian Bashing, Complete, Dark Themes, Drama, Experimentation, Extreme Dark Themes, Friendship, H/C, Intimidation

Challenges: None

Series: None

Chapters: 6 Completed: Yes Word count: 27763 Read: 2 Published: 11/19/2018 Updated: 11/19/2018

Story Notes:

No pairings. Alan Birch as the preggie one :)

1. [Chapter 1](#) by lydkiya

2. [Chapter 2](#) by lydkiya

3. [Chapter 3](#) by lydkiya

4. [Chapter 4](#) by lydkiya

5. [Chapter 5](#) by lydkiya

6. [Chapter 6](#) by lydkiya

Chapter 1 by lydkiya

Author's Notes:

This is one piece of sappy fic! Not my best work, and originally not intended "published" on the Mpreg- list at all. But I felt I had to give the list a birthday present, and since I've got my head stuck in exams for the time being I had no choice but to dig in my files. So, here you are, happy birthday everybody! :)

Marion Dreyford was a controversial scientist, to say the least. Tall, skinny and with her raven black locks of hair she looked like she was one of the Addams' family's lost daughters. She was in the middle of her forties, thin lines round her mouth and eyes indicating a life filled with much work. The scientist was as stubborn as she was brilliant, and Philip Watters, the Hospital Manager was starting to regret he ever hired the woman to Chicago Hope.

He was doctor by heart, but had recently been bumped upwards in the system and made Head of the Hospital, due to his experience and many years as a trusted member of the Chicago Hope family. He was the prime example of a kid originating from the slum, making it in a world that was growing more and more hostile against those with lesser means. Philip was proud of his Puerto Rican heritage, and he also helped run a boxing-club for children in the slum. In the midst of his fifties he was still a vivid man, and with his heart wrapped around the church he had become the very heart of Chicago Hope Hospital. But Ms. Dreyford was the big thorn in Philip's great jigsaw-puzzle of organising a smooth running hospital nowadays. The woman even caused him more headaches than the trouble-child Jeffrey Geiger who was his top heart-surgeon. And now she'd scheduled to meet him so she could lay forth some new plans of hers... Philip smelled trouble.

Chicago Hope was the best hospital money could buy, and often the doctors and scientists pushed borders to develop and improve health care. Philip just happened to be the lucky one trying to keep it all together. It's tricky business trying to run a hospital, and there was a reason for having a lawyer amongst the staff. Unluckily for Philip, Alan Birch, the lawyer, was stuck in court fighting against some lawsuit, and that meant Philip would have to face Ms. Dreyford, or The Dragon, as some preferred to call her- alone..

\*\_\*

Ms. Dreyford didn't bother to knock on Philip's door, something that didn't surprise him much.. He watched her stroll into his office, with her hair tied in a bun on the top of her head and wearing Dame Edna glasses and a messy labcoat. Charming indeed.

"Philip!" she greeted as she slammed some papers down on his desk: "Finally the day has arrived!"

"For what?!" Philip barked, somewhat annoyed by the woman's dramatic entrance. A triumphant grin appeared on lips too red with lipstick.

"The time has come for me to start a program that's been in the works the last ten years!"

Philip denied himself the relief of rolling his eyes. Ms. Dreyford was certainly an eccentric caricature and she showed signs of all her years in a lab.

"Can you please cut to the chase, Ms. Dreyford? I have a busy schedule today!" he told her sternly.

She gave him a glare of loath, as if he was destroying some great performance by rushing her.

"Alright, Philip I'll make it short so that you'll be able to remember it! During my research I've discovered a way to make men pregnant! I've tried it out with male rats and monkeys and that worked out just fine- now it's time to test it out on a human subject!"

Philip stared at her for about five seconds in disbelief before he bursted into laughter. Bonebag Ms. Dreyford gave him a look of contempt.

"Stop laughing! I'm serious! I've found a way to make it work! This would mean plenty of publicity for Chicago Hope!"

"Oh, it'll mean publicity alright!!!" Philip chuckled as he brushed away some tears of joy with his finger. "And the day you'll be granted permission to do this in Chicago Hope is the day I'm Riverdancing down in the cafeteria! Now, good day, Ms Dreyford!" Philip pointed towards the door. Dreyford's face went from pale to steaming red in an instant.

"You can't blow me off just like that, Philip!!!" she snarled as she started picking up her papers in a menacing pace.

"I can and I just did!" Philip answered her grimly: "You could of course try your case with the hospital board, but I'll guarantee you they'll have the same answer! I could name ten state laws that forbid you to go forth with your plans, and I'm certain no other hospital with respect for humanity will grant you permission either. Don't slam the door on you way out!"

\*\_\*

Alan popped his head into Philip's office just as his boss was leaving for the day. Philip couldn't help but smile as the tiny man entered the room. Alan was the lawyer of this hospital and he was as vital for the continued existence of the hospital as Philip, and probably more even. You only needed one look at him to realize that this man wouldn't intentionally hurt even the smallest fly. His big and kind blue eyes were a dead giveaway for his kindness. It was a miracle that Alan was as successful a lawyer as he was, given the fact that he looked as intimidating as a wet kitten. But he reeked of integrity, and honesty. When you looked into Alan's eyes you couldn't believe he was even able to conduct a lie, and *that* was what made Alan a brilliant lawyer. Not

his skill to find the right paragraphs and dirty counter strikes, but his honest eyes. And what was worse, he was as honest and kind as he looked..

"So, what was it Ms. Dreyford wanted? Has she found a cure for cancer or warts?" he asked as he dropped his briefcase down to the floor.

"Yeah, well.. thanks for not being here, Alan!" Philip sighed as he rubbed his temples: "The Dragon or "Ms. Dreyford" had some revolutionary ideas to say the least, which she wanted to test out on human subjects."

"And that was...?" A childlike smile appeared on the lawyer's face, who himself also had been granted a nickname, "The Eel".

"Nothing much, making men pregnant I believe it was..." Philip told him as he fetched his coat.

"Are you SERIOUS?! Is that even possible??" Alan gaped and dropped his briefcase for the second time. He'd spent ten straight hours in the courtroom today and was exhausted.

"I mean, there must be at least twenty state laws forbidding it!"

"Well, she claims she can make it happen. She's even tried it out on male rats.. and monkeys I believe it was."

"Wow," Alan scratched his chin with an amazed look on his face.

"But you told her NO, right?" he added with huge eyes: "I won't be the one defending \*that\* in court!!!!"

Philip smiled as he ushered the tiny man out of his office and followed his trail.

"Don't you worry, there'll be no pregnant men in this hospital as long as I'm here to stop it!"

\*\_\*

She was furious on Philip Watters and his lack of integrity and will to look beyond tomorrow. Her work was important and no one should stand in the way of evolvement! Of course the hospital board was agreeing with the old goat, no surprise given the fact that Watters also was a member of it. She would have to find a way round all the laws and boards if her precious work would bear fruits. And what Philip Watters didn't know wouldn't hurt him!

She was hurrying down the hallway with some lab reports when the hospital's lawyer bumped into her.

"Oh, I'm so sorry Ms Dreyford! I didn't see you there!" he excused himself as he picked up nothing less than four briefcases he'd been carrying.

"Well, maybe it's time you start using your eyes then!!!" she snarled down to the much shorter man. He looked like he was about to say something, but instead he swallowed his words, tilted his head to the side and continued down the hallway like a frightened rat.

she thought to herself as she continued in the opposite direction.

Back down in her lab her mind started wandering, though. Alan Birch, thirty-four years old, no wife, no girlfriend.. Apparently he had no friends or family.. Hadn't she overheard him nagging to a nurse once that he was very lonely? A devious smile grew on The Dragon's lips as she decided to check out some details on this man. Maybe, just maybe he was stupid enough to get

caught in her trap?

She did some checking about, and discovered her guesses to be true. Alan Birch was indeed single and very lonely. He spent more time at the hospital than anywhere else, and even here he wasn't well liked. He was in fact perfect!!! He would thank her for what she had to offer him, a chance to defeat his loneliness!

\*\_\*

Alan had stopped trying to get a life outside Chicago Hope a long time ago. All his skills and time was spent keeping the hospital afloat, and he no longer had the energy dream any more, except on late, sleepless nights. He wondered how it would feel like to be embraced, to be loved by someone, he wondered how it would feel like to be appreciated for the person he was, instead of being dependant of his skills as a lawyer to receive some appreciation. He worked hard, and sacrificed his soul to defend the doctors that had become his only family. But did the hotshot doctors show their gratitude? Not once. Why should they? This was his job. The Eel was paid so that the doctors of Chicago Hope could mess up in the OR and still go home happy and satisfied with a safe job by the end of the shift.

He was used to being the invisible one, the one no one noticed. The one you could blame if something went wrong, the one you could accuse of greed if it granted the hospital. Never the less, Alan Birch did his job, and he was even proud of it. As he never fulfilled his dream to become a doctor himself he did the next best thing, he became their protector. So what if he came home to an empty apartment at night, feeling even emptier inside? Maybe it was his destiny to be alone. He never showed his loneliness to anybody, or not intentionally at least. He tried his best to act as if he was as happy and socially engaged as the other employees of the hospital, but some things shines through, and Alan was a bad actor. Still he had a good friend in Philip, the hospital manager, and some of the doctor's showed him their friendly sides from time to time. He reckoned he had nothing to complain about, but still this... black hole in his heart slowly kept growing bigger. Alan didn't know it, but it had a name, Longing.

\*\_\*

He was diving into a pile of papers when she strode into the room with utter most matter of cause, a smug smile pasted on her red lips.

"Ms. Dreyford," he greeted her in a friendly tone and gestured for her to sit down, as he tried to hide some of the worst mess occupying his desk.

"What can I do for you?" His smile revealed his nerves, he always felt uneasy with this woman. She was a tad too eccentric and seemed willing to take risks a bit too easily. And now she leaned forward, with a look of pure innocence in her face that scared the living daylights out of him.

"Nothing much, really. I just wanted to see how you were doing, and perhaps give you the chance of a lifetime..?" Alan leaned back in his chair and didn't know if he should feel touched about her concern or if he should feel suspicious.

"Well, thank you for the concern, I'm doing just fine Marion! And what's this offer of a life time you're considering offering me?" he asked, not able to hide his curiosity after all. She rose from her seat and wandered over to the window in Alan's office. While she looked out to the city underneath her she asked him one devastating question.

"Have you never wanted to start a family, Alan? I mean, you look like a sensible guy, I just think it's strange you don't have a Mrs. Birch to come home to late at night, a little Alan Jr. to tuck in and read bedtime stories for. Don't you want this?" Alan didn't know what to answer. He wished for

that above anything, and this was the one thing he couldn't win with his sharp mind and gifts as a lawyer.

"Of course I wish for those things," he answered after a while: "but I don't work in a profession allowing me much time off to search for a wife, and I don't seem to be what women in general are looking for." Dreyford turned and walked towards her where she was sitting behind his desk, a devious glint in her eye.

"It's too bad you can't have what your heart desires Alan. You're a good guy, you deserve to become a father!"

Alan felt uneasy discussing this with a woman he hardly knew.

"Well, there's not much I can do about that I'm afraid." He rubbed his neck and smiled awkwardly: "Not as long as I'm single."

Marion leaned over the desk and stared him in the eye.

"It's not fair Alan! It's not fair that you should have to spend all those lonely nights, while all the doctors can go home after ended shift and bask in the love of their loved ones. There should be some pleasure for you too in this world, shouldn't it Alan?" Alan slowly backed away from the scientist who was lipping small drops of spit as she spoke upon his face.

"I'm not the only guy on this hospital without a family to go home to when the shift ends," Alan defended himself: "Jeffrey Geiger for example."

"Jeffrey Geiger is nuts, honey, we both know it!" Dreyford shot back: "Come on, you can't try to convince me that you're contempt with your life?!" That one stung, and Alan was unable to hide it as so many times before when he had been hurt.

"I accept my life," he answered her, but was no longer able to meet her eye. A dangerous glint appeared in her eyes as she drew even closer to the withdrawing lawyer, and she pursed her lips and whispered him what could very well be the end to his miserable life one way or another.

"I might know a way for you to have that life, to be loved for the one you are, not for what you do, I can make it so you will never have to feel lonely ever again!" Alan's eyes darted upwards as hope was ignited against his will.

"How?" his lips betrayed him, already knowing what suggestion she had in mind. It was ludicrous, less than a week ago he'd laughed when Phillip told him about Dreyford's experiment. And now it was offered to him as a gift, and his heart was already starting to accept the ludicrous idea, not minding the screaming protests from his common senses. She was in need of a guinea pig, and he was the chosen one. He was the weak link, the one with something to gain if he went along with this, even if he should end up ruining his career in the process.

"I'm a `man', it's unnatural!" Alan mumbled, eyes crying for an escape. He had to get rid of this woman, before his defences got too weak. He would lose what little family he had left if he went through with this, he would lose Philip, and he would lose Chicago Hope.

"It's a beautiful thing, carrying a child to the world!" Ms. Dreyford told him: "You can feel it growing inside you, living inside you, and when it's born ... the feeling is indescribable. I'm offering you the greatest feeling, Alan. You'll be able to experience something no man has done before you! And you'll have a daughter or son, your own flesh, your own family."

She patted his shivering arm, knowing he was biting the hook.

"Think about it, Alan," she whispered and left the office with easy steps. Like taking candy from a baby!

\*\_\*

Alan went around in a fog the following day. His mind was racing, considering back and forth. His greatest wish in the whole damn world was to become a father. He was thirty four years old, not an old man. But he was starting to feel the stress none the less. He'd been on the search for a soulmate since he was eighteen, and hadn't found one yet. What were the odds he would find her during the next couple of years, given his work rate?? Unless one of the single nurses put aside their prejudices against him and was willing to give the workaholic a try, Alan was screwed. Maybe when he was sixty five he could start finding a wife. But that would mean no children...

\*\_\*

It was around midnight. Marion Dreyford was busily working in her lab, preparing the next nine months down to the last detail. If this was to be a success the hospital board and that sneak Philip Banks had to be fooled as long as humanly possible. She stood with her back against the door when the knock came. A satisfied smile brushed over the thin woman's face as she continued her work, undisturbed.

"The door is open Alan," she simply said. After a few hesitating seconds the lawyer slipped inside the lab. She didn't have to turn around to know he was tugging his tie nervously while looking around in her workspace.

"Sit down, Alan. I have the feeling you are nocturnal like me. We have the whole night to make your wish come true."

"I'm... I'm not entirely sure I want to do this..." he mumbled as the feet of a chair scraped against the floor. Oh, he was sure alright!! He was a rare specimen this one, with a heart as big as a whale. If he'd decided to put down this offer he would have self combusted. A man such as him needed someone to love; it was the corner stone of his life, the one thing that made sense for him. Luckily for Dreyford, she was a good judge of caricature. That was what had made this so easy.

\*\_\*

Five hours later Alan was sick as a dog thanks to a hormonal boost set by Marion Dreyford. He was lying flat out on his back in a bed in the corner of her office, regretting the whole mess. In less than an hour he would receive the shot that was going to change his entire life, and the fear of loosing what little joy he had in life suddenly came back with full force. What if something went wrong during the experiment, what if he was caught early in the pregnancy and was forced to go through with an abortion?? What new nicknames would be granted the Eel of Chicago Hope then? And he was supposed to take hormonal shots every single day during the pregnancy... The only comfort he found in that was that they would be smaller than this one. Still he had to brace himself for some rocky months as his body adjusted to the hormones.

The scientist offered him no comfort as he was vomiting, and he'd never expected her to either. This was nothing but science for her, and he new she didn't care one bit about his welfare. Still he bit his teeth together and allowed her to put him through this ordeal. He'd allowed her to extract his sperm, and to let it impregnate an anonymous egg donor. Now all they had to do was to wait until she had confirmed fertilization of the egg and the worst waves of nausea had passed in Alan's body.

The worst part was the waiting. During these endless hours during the night Alan had a good time to consider the lunacy of what he was doing. But he no longer had any choice. His heart had

decided a long time ago, and his body and wits was forced to go along with the ride.

\*\_\*

At eight the following morning Ms. Dreyford allowed him to leave, after a crash course in how to give yourself a shot of hormones every morning. She handed him a briefcase containing shots for the entire next nine months and patted him on the shoulder in a business like manner.

"It would be too risky for the both of us if you were dependant on me to give you the shot each morning. People might get suspicious. You'll see me for counselling and tests once a week, at midnight, as we agreed. During the next session we'll find out if you got lucky the first time or if we have to extend the hormonal treatment before implanting a new fertilized egg into you abdomen."

Alan simply nodded. He hadn't caught a wink of sleep the entire night and was due back at his office in thirty minutes. The new hormone shot was already starting to work, and the only thing occupying his mind right now was to avoid puking on his suit.

Alan sat down behind his desk, surprised by the treachery of his own tears. He had no idea of why he was crying, he had no idea of what he was feeling right now. His whole mind was a mess, and Alan longed to lie down and take the load off his feet for some hours. But before he reached the hard couch cramped into a corner of his office heart surgeon Jeffrey Geiger charged into his office. Jeffrey was a man with a troubled past. Some years ago his wife had drowned their son in the bathtub, and turned the harmonic man's life upside down. Now he was a loudmouthed workaholic, striding to be nothing but the best of the best. Often he spoke first, and thought about it afterwards. He and Alan had their issues, but coexisted in Chicago Hope, knowing they both were dependant on the other to have a job to return to in the mornings.

"I thought I saw you come in early for once..." Jeffrey started, but swallowed what he was about to say when he noticed Alan's wet cheeks.

"Someone died?" he asked blatantly, but honestly as Alan crept back behind his desk and dried the tears away like a madman. He shook his head and attempted a smile while Jeffrey sat down in a chair opposite his desk. There was comfort in his eyes, and it was like balsam for Alan's soul not to get bombarded with further questions. As so many times before he shook his feelings away and returned as the clear thinking lawyer. He silently thanked Jeffrey who went along with his charade.

"What can I do for you, Geiger?" he asked pleasantly as he folded his hands and looked calm and relaxed once more. The cold sweat on his forehead and the nausea cursing through him was evident signs of his discomfort, but Alan knew Geiger would let him be if that was what Alan wanted.

"It's The Dragon, I can't stand her!!! She always creeps around in the OR looking for something she can use for her experiments. You have to tell her that she has to stay away, or else she will end up with a scalpel jammed up her ass. The scarecrow shows me no respect what so ever, so I need you to set her straight!!" Jeffrey was honest, as always. Alan dreaded the very thought of having to retaliate Ms. Dreyford, but knew he had no other choice.

"I'll have a talk with her."

"Great!" Jeffrey smiled as he got to his feet: "I owe you one, Alan! Notify me the next time you need some heart surgery! Oh, I guess you would have to have a heart first!" he added with a grin as he swept through the door.

\*\_\*

The following week was a hellish experiment for Alan. He was constantly nauseous, and had no control what so ever over his upset stomach. He was throwing up everything that he ate and had to cancel several meetings to the favour of the toilets on his floor. The third day he wandered the hallways like a zombie Philip decided enough was enough and sent him home with the order of getting well before he came back. Alan was grateful to dive into his bed and gather some strength, knowing only too well that he might feel this sick for the entire nine months if he was unlucky. His whole body ached as it tried to settle with the changes done to it, and still he was struggling with the mental after currents of his choice. It was so weird going around wondering if he was pregnant! He might have a tiny human being growing inside of him.

He slowly started to slide into some sort of routine with the nausea. If his stomach was empty when he took the hormonal shot in the morning he would be sick as dog for about an hour, and then it would draw back making him able to function as a normal human being again as long as he took his precautions. There was certain food his stomach didn't tolerate and he had to be thorough with eating the same amount of food at all meals. This way he managed to go back to work on the seventh day, the same day he had the appointment with The Dragon.

The day went by in a fog. His entire mind was wrapped about what he would learn from the meeting later that night.

\*\_\*

She had an impatient look on her face as when he entered her office five past twelve.

"You're late!" Her voice was annoyed: "I don't tolerate any laziness from my test subjects Mr. Birch, when I tell you a time, you show up! Now, pee in this!" she added in a more moderate tone as she handed him a jar. Alan silently obeyed; too tense about what the test result would tell him in a matter of minutes to bother with the woman's snapping.

Minutes felt like hours as he sat, watching his own pee drying on a small stick. Ms. Dreyford scurried about like a squirrel seemingly just as eager to know the result as Alan. Finally she had a look at her wristwatch and decided it was time. Alan watched with all the blood in his body rushing to his head as she raised the stick and gave it a glare through the thick glasses of her eyeglasses.

"So... what did it say???" he said when he no longer could stand the waiting. She handed him the stick as a triumphant grin ran over her lips.

"You and I, my dear boy- are making world history!!!"

\*\_\*

Another sleepless night.. There was no way back now, he was pregnant, pregnant for real! He lay in his bed the entire night, looking down on a flat stomach that now was hiding a tiny foetus. He was a man, and he was pregnant. He was a lawyer at a hospital and he was pregnant! It suddenly dawned to him what task he'd laid upon himself. He had to hide the pregnancy from the best doctors in the world, was he nuts even hoping he would pull it off?? As the months went by he would have to start changing habits, hopefully having people believe he was gaining weight because of what he ate. Alan had just started on a journey no one knew where would end, not even the scientist that had done this to him. His only hope for saving his connections with Chicago Hope was that Philip would forgive him in the end...

\*\_\*

Everything affected him the first couple of months of his pregnancy. The hormones made him



change mood in a matter of seconds, Alan often found himself crying in the bathroom, feeling drained and disgusted with himself.

His moody behaviour played him a couple of dirty tricks in court, but thankfully Alan was professional to the fingertips when it came to his appearance in the court room. To fight his demons he usually sat in one of the stalls of the men's bathroom; singing, or crying- given whatever mood he was in before he was going to trial. Alan's nights filled with sweet dreams of fatherhood, he could see himself tossing a laughing toddler to the sky and catching him or her with his face lit up in smile. These dreams passed into daydreams when the sun conquered the dark, and slowly Alan was starting to feel joy about the tiny spark of life he carried with him wherever he went. He could have a bad day in court, being bullied in meetings or simply stand half bored to death in the line of the supermarket when the thought would strike him:

[Back to index](#)

Chapter 2 by lydkiya

\*\_\*

It was a glorious morning and Alan felt rested and in shape as he strolled through the emergency reception, looking for one of the doctors he needed to have a word with. Normally he stayed the hell away from this area of the hospital. It was too filled with drama and sad stories for him, and now lately he couldn't stand the smell there either, it was making him queasy. But today had started so well for the small lawyer that he felt well enough to even conquer the smell of fear as people were rushed in, looked at and then rolled away. And as he went there looking the doors flew up as another one floating between life and death was rolled in by an ambulance crew.

"We have a car crash here, female, 48 years old, bleeding heavily!!!" the man in charge screamed as the doctors on call rushed to the stretcher's side. Amongst them was Billy Kronk, the very doctor Alan was searching for. Kronk had a look on a smashed face, covered in blood and let out a gasp as he recognised the torn face.

"Holy crap, it's The Dragon!" he yelled, making more doctors and nurses rush to. Alan stopped dead, in the middle of a step. Was his hearing failing him?? What did Kronk say?? Slowly he approached the stretcher, struggling to see the person being tapped, examined and diagnosed. He tried to peer through, but all he saw was a bloodstained, limp hand.

"Excuse me; I need to speak with Kronk!" Slowly he worked his way through the crowd that was gasping with horror as they watched the lifeless person struggling to stay alive. Finally he reached Kronk's side, only to get shoved aside by the very same man.

"Don't get in my way, Eel!!! I'm trying to save a life here!!!" he barked as he pushed Alan away, staining his suit with the blood of the patient.

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean to..." Alan excused helplessly: "I just... I had to ask you if I heard you right..."

"Yes, it's the Dragon!! Now get the hell away from my sight Eel, so that I can get to work!!!" Billy roared in the same second as the woman on the stretcher flat lined. One of the nurses pushed Alan away from the scene, and before he knew it he fell down on the floor as his dream vanished before his eyes. If Dreyford died he would lose the baby. All he had hoped for would be flushed down the drain, his hopes crushed beyond imagination. More doctors rushed to the emergency reception as the rumour about The Dragon spread like wildfire through the corridors, and several of them stumbled over Alan on their way to see for themselves.

"Open her up! We need to work her heart!!!!" Billy Kronk howled: "Page Jeffrey!!!"

Alan slowly got to his feet and crept away, the sound of Billy's orders echoing in his ears.

"We're losing her!" was the last he heard before the door shut behind him. Aaron Shut, the top brain surgeon of Chicago Hope collided with the lawyer as he too rushed towards the emergency room.

"Hey, watch it, Alan!" he yelled, already down the hall, not noticing the distraught face of his colleague.

He sat down behind his desk, face dissolving in tears, as both hands clasped the treasure he was about to lose. Dreyford couldn't die, she had to survive!! Jeffrey was the best of the best; he would fix her up so that she could continue her secret experiment. After a while he felt ashamed of his wallowing in self-pity, after all there were another life at stake here too. So he rose wearily to his feet to find Philip. He would know the status on Ms. Dreyford.

The gloom on Philip's face as he entered told it all.

"She died, didn't she," he muttered as he dumped down in a chair. Philip nodded.

"Fifteen minutes ago. She died on the table, Jeffrey wasn't able to save her..." Alan closed his eyes as the pain in his chest reappeared. So it was over then, he wouldn't have his family after all.

"I'll notify her family," he mumbled and struggled to keep calm on the exterior.

"She didn't have one," Philip said: "She's left no loved ones as far as I know. That woman was too preoccupied with her lab rats to settle down." Alan's eyes darted upwards in disbelief.

"That's not correct!" he said: "She once told me how great it was to be a mother! I'm sure she has a family!"

A confused gaze searched the lawyer.

"She has NO family, Alan. I don't know why she said it was great to be a mother, I'm one hundred percent sure she wasn't!"

How could he have been so stupid. The great tale of the greatness of motherhood was just another little trick to have Alan biting the bait. Alan could have slapped himself for his naivety. He could feel his stomach squirm with unease and knew he'd better head for the men's room pretty quick. But he couldn't leave yet.

"What... happened to her?" he asked wearily, rubbing his forehead with a cold palm.

"Apparently she fell asleep behind the wheel and crashed into a concrete wall," Philip told him. She's probably stayed up half the night working again.

Alan rushed to his feet and excused himself in a hurry. He had to go through her files and destroy incriminating material before anyone else got to it!!! He forgot all about his nausea as he hurried down the corridors on his way to Dreyford's lab. His heart raced as he snook inside her office. Working in a daze, he blocked out the urge to lay down and cry for what he'd lost this day. He had to cover his tracks, then he could go home and wither away.

Alan had no idea of how long he'd been emptying Marion Dreyford's office of evidence, but finally he was all done. He stuffed the papers and various floppy disks in an empty paper bag and went as fast as he could down the hallways, rushing for the exit.

[Back to index](#)

Chapter 3 by lydkiya

Alan stood in the courtroom, yapping away with another heartfelt defence-speech. So, Jeffrey

had been slapped with a lawsuit for the tenth time or so, and it was up to the Hospital's lawyer to set things straight once more. Alan had stopped counting a long time ago. All his skills and time was spent keeping Chicago Hope floating, and did the hotshot doctors show their gratitude? Not once. Why should they? This was his job. The Eel was paid so that the doctors of Chicago Hope could mess up in the OR and still go home happy and satisfied with a safe job by the end of the shift.

He was used to being the invisible, the one no one noticed. The one you could blame if something went wrong, the one you could accuse of greed if it granted the hospital. Never the less, Alan Birch did his job, and he was even proud of it. As he never fulfilled his dream to become a doctor himself he did the next best thing, he became their protector.

And now it was Jeffrey who was in need of his aid.

"Dr. Geiger only did what he decided was best for his client! If he did what councillor indicated he should have done the patient would have died sooner. Yes, Mr. Harrison would probably have been saved if the elevator hadn't stopped. It's terrible, but true. But Jeffrey Geiger can't be held responsible for the elevator breaking down! Geiger is one of the world's greatest heart surgeons, and he would NEVER make a rash decision. Mr Harrison couldn't have been luckier when it came to choice of doctor, but sadly that wasn't enough.."

The judge looked like he was about to die of boredom.. And by any luck, he would die of old age by the time Alan finished his closing statement. But as he stood there, speaking, he suddenly got light-headed. It got difficult to breathe, and the room started spinning.

"Therefore I must advise the court..." A cold sweat broke out on his back and Alan stumbled forward.

"Alan, are you okay?" He barely heard the voice of Jeffrey and couldn't tell what he was saying. He shot his hands towards his throat, tugging the tie, feeling like he was suffocating. And so, as white, sparkly dots started dancing before his eyes he rushed to the floor.

\*\_\*

Jeffrey Geiger was up on his feet the instant Alan Birch toppled forward, grasping for his tie, but he didn't manage to reach him before fell to the floor.

"Now what!" the old goon of a judge barked as he leaned over his desk to see what was going on. Jeffrey checked Alan's throat for a pulse and gave a sigh of relief.

"He just fainted! The little weasel only fainted!" he said, with a smile on his lips. The judge rolled his eyes and mumbled something about dramaqueens.

"Wake up Alan!" Jeffrey pinched the lawyer's cheek and got an immediate response.

"Thaaat's a good boy!" Alan opened his eyes and stared at Jeffrey with a confused look on his face.

"What just happened?" he mumbled as he blinked frantically and looked around.

"I bet you didn't have breakfast this morning, did you!" Jeffrey said as he stood up. Alan shrieked as he remembered where he was and clumsily got to his feet.

"May I proceed with my closing statement, Sir?" he asked Judge Aldrich who actually seemed disappointed he was able to stand up.

"Hey, relax there, Alan! Are you sure you're able to continue?" Jeffrey asked him and patted his back with friendly concern. His face frowned with surprise as his fingers felt something behind Alan's blue shirt.

"What's this....?" He asked and stroke a hard fabric concealed by Alan's shirt.

"Nothing!" Alan urged and drew away from the curious grasp. But Jeffrey had already realised what it was and a terrible smirk grew on the doctor's lips.

"Is that a corset you're wearing, counsellor??" he asked, with much amusement.

\*\_\*

NO! Not now! Alan's eyes begged Jeffrey to shut up, to leave him be before it was too late. But the old bat up behind the judge's desk smelled blood. Alan wheezed for Jeffrey to find his seat, trying hard to block out the sniggering doctor as he passed him on his way to the centre of the floor again. He came as far as to open his lips before the judge who'd made it his soul purpose in life to make Alan's time in the courtroom a living hell cut him off.

"Ah, ah, ah... Don't you start yappin again, toad!" he barked as he leaned down with a frown.

"I want to see this corset of yours! Is it lace?" he added, making the entire courtroom laugh discreetly.

"I'm not here to have a fashion show! And besides, what I wear is no ones business but my own!" Alan stated, as a stubborn frown appeared on his forehead. Aldrich rose from his seat, anger building in his face of righteousness.

"When what you wear compromises your client's case it IS the court's business counsellor!" he snapped.

"What do you mean, compromises my client's case?!" Alan shot back, pure spite painting his words.

"What do I mean?! You're wearing undergarments that are obviously so tight that you find it hard to breathe when wearing them!" The judge bellowed: "Now take off your shirt and show it to me or I'll have you thrown in jail for contempt!" He sat down again, trembling with anger. A silent plea from Alan didn't work. He stared down on his chest, as he silently started to unbutton his shirt, ears burning with shame. Of all the times he'd been humiliated in this courtroom this was the worst one yet! An amused giggle spread through the room as he worked on the buttons, in the corner of his eye Alan could see the prosecuting attorney try to hide a grin.

"There!" he said as he finished the last button and showed the judge what he was wearing underneath his shirt: "Satisfied?!" The old man chuckled with self-smugness but of course he wasn't finished yet.

"Very good, counsellor! Now turn and face the courtroom, while flashing that cute little outfit of yours, while saying "I. Am. A. Toad!" Alan sighed silently before he took a deep inhale of breath and did as the judge had ordered...

\*\_\*

Alan ran rather than walked back to his office after paying the cab, as he finally was excused from court and the case was dismissed. With lungs burning for oxygen he shut the door as the tears of humiliation finally was allowed to come. Alan was tired. He was tired of hiding, but he knew no other way. In a hospital people would start asking questions if they saw what state he

was in.

He was just about to sit down behind his desk with a silent gasp of discomfort when Jeffrey Geiger steamed into his office.

"Take off the corset!" he demanded and dragged Alan out on the floor.

"Hey! Let go of me, Jeffrey!" Alan squealed, as he struggled to escape the arms holding him back. But Jeffrey did no such thing.

"No!" he answered firmly: "I'm not letting go before you promise me I'll have a look at you! Something is wrong, I've been smelling it for weeks!" Alan jerked free from the doctor's grip.

"I don't know what you're talking about!" he snorted and brushed the arm of his shirt. He was starting to get dizzy again due to all the hoopla.

"Would you be so kind as to leave?!" He pointed towards the door with a trembling index finger, but Jeffrey had no plans about leaving yet. As Alan turned his back to him and was starting to walk away Jeffrey stepped forward and ripped the shirt off Alan's back in one fierce move. Buttons flew across the room as the fabric was torn away, and Alan turned around with a terrified look on his face.

"What are you doing?" His voice was barely a mumble, and the surface of his eyes grew glassy.

"Take off that corset Alan, or I will have to do it for you!!" Jeffrey's command was ordered in a friendly but strict tone. Alan slowly stepped backwards, away from the doctor he'd just saved from suspension, wondering if there was any chance in hell he would reach the door before Jeffrey did. Jeffrey smelled his plan and shook his head.

"You could try, but I *would* slam it in your face before you even got that far, Alan."

"Why are you doing this to me?" Alan whispered as he slowly undressed his torso before the heart surgeon would do it for him.

"Because I'm worried, Alan," Jeffrey answered, as the same honesty that inhabited Alan's eyes rose to the surface. Alan closed his eyes as the corset fell to the floor. Indeed, he had to look pretty silly, standing there with nothing else than a tie covering his upper body! But there was no amusement in that image for neither Jeffrey or Alan..

"Oh my God!" Jeffrey gasped as he stared on the distended gut of the lawyer of Chicago Hope: "No wonder you were wearing a corset!" Alan tried to cover himself with his hands, but in vane.

"There!" he mumbled as his gaze went shamefully down to the floor: "Are you happy now, Jeffrey? Did you get your fun, can you please leave me alone now?!" A warm hand was placed on his shoulder.

"Alan, you need to have that checked out! You may be very sick! I'm concerned about you, this had nothing to do with our... previous bickering! Is it alright if I do a little check-up on your belly right now, is it tender? I believe you have a growing cyst located somewhere down in your abdomen. The swelling of your lower stomach indicates that," Jeffrey told Alan with a kind, caring tone.

He was caught, like a rabbit in a snare. Alan had no way of escape. He made it as far as six months and one week. Would it be enough? He had no clue what so ever...

Alan slowly lifted his gaze, heart trembling as he surrendered and gave his consent. He closed

his eyes as Jeffrey placed both his palms towards his naked stomach and squeezed it gently. A long and awkward silence followed as Jeffrey's hands worked their way up and down Alan's stomach. Finally he removed them, and Alan opened his eyes to find disbelief and shock in the other man's brown eyes. Jeffrey Geiger took a deep breath before he blurted out with what had to be named as a sensational discovery to say the least.

"It's been a while since I last did check ups like these, as hearts are my field of expertise. But if I still have some knowledge left and if I haven't lost my marbles yet, Alan, I think I may have to diagnose you as pregnant!"

He looked up and discovered that Alan's cheeks were wet.

"You've known all along, haven't you?!" he gaped as he took one step back, and realisation dawned on the black curled man's face.

"You \*let\* Dreyford knock you up before she was killed in the car accident, didn't you?!" Alan nodded, as he looked shamefully down to the floor.

"She gave me an offer I couldn't refuse.." he mumbled as his naked mind was bared. The lonely man, the man so secretly aching for a family, for someone to love him.. The last words Jeffrey said before he stormed out of the office to fetch the hospital manager scared the living daylight out of Alan.

"Holy crap, you're going to give Philip a heart attack!!!"

\*\_\*

He sat behind his desk when they stormed in; dressed in a fresh shirt from the closet he had by the door. Alan didn't bother to run, he knew it was over. Philip was yelling even before he entered the room with Jeffrey at his heels.

"Alan, you son of a bitch!!! What the hell kind of a mess have you made of your self \*this\* time?!?" he screamed as he slammed his palms to Alan's desk with a bang. Alan kept staring down on some sheets of paper lying before him; his tongue seemed disabled at the moment.

"Calm down, Philip!" Jeffrey urged and dragged his boss a bit further away from the smaller man seated behind the desk: "Give the man a chance to explain himself! What drove you to it Alan, lunacy or madness?" he added with a sarcastic undertone. Alan finally raised his gaze, revealing his bleeding heart.

"I always wanted a family," he mumbled as Philip jerked free from Jeffrey's grip.

"Get up Alan! I won't believe this before I see it myself!!!" he barked. Alan silently did as he was told and raised his shirt obediently.

"Holy mother of Mary! How far along are you!?" Philip gasped as he discovered the bulk on Alan's abdomen.

"I would say six months, give or take a week," Jeffrey interfered, giving Alan's stomach a searching look.

"Six months, one week.." Alan confirmed, making Philip actually tug his beard.

"Oh my God, boy!! What were you thinking hiding something like this from me?!" he moaned and pointed towards Alan's belly as if it was infested with cholera.

"You would have made me abort it, Philip." Alan buttoned his shirt and sat down behind his desk again.

"You're damn right I would have!" Philip roared: "And you're still going to! I don't care how many months you are along, Alan, men don't give birth to children, it's abomination!!" For the first time in his life Alan's eyes filled with spite towards the only one he trusted in the whole world.

"It's unnatural for me to carry a child, but it's ethically defensible to kill a child that could have been saved on this very hospital if born today??! You don't believe in killing the innocent, Philip, why start now?!?!"

"You made the choice, Alan. You made the choice, not considering what life you had to offer this baby. What life can you give it? A child, born by a man- what life do you honestly think it will get?!?! It will be considered a freak! YOU will be considered a freak by the world! You're coming with me right now, before this slips out! That freak child of yours will be terminated!" Alan didn't have to look at Philip's bulging eyes to know he was furious and that he meant every word that he yelled.

"I knew you wouldn't approve, Philip, but I didn't know you would steep to this..." The words were barely audible. Alan was hurt by his best friend's words, deeply hurt. But Philip was in no mood to forgive and forget.

"How could \*I\* steep to this??! Dear God, I knew you were lonely, Alan, but that doesn't justify you breaking all the rules just so that \*you\* can get a family!!! Are you even aware of the possible consequences you might suffer from if carrying this baby to term?!?!?"

"There's a few risks, Dreyford told me. But as long as I keep healthy I will do fine. Now that I've stepped over the twelfth week border there's only a slim possibility I might abort." Alan answered, fidgeting with his tie as he spoke. Philip was like the father he never had, and getting yelled at like this by him made Alan feel smaller than a louse. Philip rolled his eyes as he listened to Alan's words.

"What about the great risk of you DYING Alan, did she mention that AT ALL?!?! Did she mention that the risk of you bleeding to death rises for each day the foetus grows inside you? Did she mention the very fact that you don't have a womb to protect both you \*and\* the baby??!" The sheepish look on Alan told it all. She never mentioned any risks as major as this. The only thing she was concerned about was if Alan should abort before he went into the second trimester... Alan realized his naivety, but still he kept his back straight. He'd gotten this far, now he had to stay the line out!

"I'm having this baby, Philip!" he said determined. The rage burning in Philip's eyes exploded.

"Oh, no you're not! I'll get permission from court if necessary to get that pregnancy terminated! And you wouldn't like that, would you now, Alan. Think of all the bad publicity both the hospital and you will get!" the doctor triumphed; sure he had the winning hand.

"Drag me to court if you want to, I'm having this baby and you can't stop me!" Alan answered him with sadness in his voice. So the process had started. He was about to lose Philip and everything he held dear here on Chicago Hope.

Philip stormed out of the office, leaving a silent Alan and a dumbstruck Jeffrey behind. The doctor eyed the Eel as the lawyer started to shiver.

"You're nuts, Alan, but I have to admit; you sure are brave!" Jeffrey confessed as Alan buried his face in the palms of his hands. Alan shook his head wearily.

"I don't know \*what\* I am anymore," he whispered, wishing Jeffrey would leave him alone.

"Come," Jeffrey said and started towards the door. Alan looked up, with resign written over his face.

"What," he sighed. Jeffrey raised his shoulders as he opened the door.

"I might not agree with the terms of which this baby has been conceived, but as a doctor I'm obliged to take care of my patients. I may be better with hearts, but I still believe I know how to use an Ultrasound Machine."

Alan rose to his feet with some hesitance and followed in the taller man's steps. Three more months, that was all. Just three more months...

\*\_\*

A mixture of all different kinds of feelings rushed through the top heart surgeon of Chicago Hope as he once more bared the stomach of lawyer Alan Birch to give it a proper examination. Alan lay down on the bench without flinching as Jeffrey prepared the Ultrasound device. Another brick to put on the Jeffrey wall of insanity! Maybe that was what was happening? Maybe Jeffrey was about to have his nervous breakdown after all? That sure was easier to swallow than the idea of Alan Birch being pregnant!

"Al right Alan. Before I have a look on this little impostor of yours I would like to have a listen to its heartbeat," Jeffrey told his patient and put his stethoscope to Alan's skin. And there it was, the rapid heartbeat of an infant. Unbelievable but true.

"Well, the little rascal sounds healthy..." Jeffrey said as he put the stethoscope away and smeared a thick, clear fluid over Alan's abdomen for the device that was used to show pictures of the foetus to run smoothly over Alan's stomach. He could feel his own pulse start to race as he put the device towards Alan's stretched skin and a flickering image appeared on the monitor up on the wall.

"Wow," was all he managed to say as the picture of a well grown foetus etched into his brain for the rest of his life. A small string of pearls indicated a spine, a flickering dot showed a beating heart. There was a head, two arms and two legs... Jeffrey had to look twice to be sure his eyes weren't deceiving him. And no matter how unnatural it might be, Jeffrey couldn't help but to get struck by the miracle of it all.

"You're going to be a pappy, Alan!" he chuckled, a smile of awe appearing on his face.

"I can't believe it, you're going to be a father! No wonder you've been so cranky lately!" Alan watched the monitor above his head, but he looked depressed rather than happy.

"Not if Philip has his way.." he mumbled, brushing his stomach absentmindedly: "I don't even know if I'm having a girl or a boy, maybe I'll never know..."

Jeffrey couldn't help it, he felt sad for Alan. The lawyer would wither away and die if Philip got the court's approval to end the pregnancy, one look at him lying there right now would tell you that.

"You want to know what it is?" Jeffrey asked, not knowing how to mend the open wound. Heck he wasn't even sure what he thought about this whole thing himself, yet.

"You can tell??" Finally some of the sadness vanished from the lawyer's face, as his curiosity took its place.



"Sure I can!" Jeffrey assured: "I just look between the baby's legs there."

"All right, tell me!" Alan said after a few seconds of thinking about it. Jeffrey smiled and patted the top of Alan's stomach.

"You're having a girl, Alan." Hands flew up to Alan's face as he received the words.

"Really?" he whispered: "I'm having a girl?" New tears found their way down Alan's cheeks. This time, on the other hand, they were tears of joy.

\*\_\*

Once a secret is revealed, it will spread. And as soon as Philip Watters had informed the hospital board about the abomination taking place between the hospital's own walls the hallways were swarming with rumours by dinnertime!

"Did you hear? Alan Birch is carrying his dead girlfriend's love child! Apparently she was pregnant when she died in that car crash, and the Eel was so distraught by losing her that he decided to carry the child in her absence!" The nurses were squabbling like caffeine infected hens in a chicken coop.

"I heard he was part of some secret experiment by Dreyford. She'd slipped something into his tea, making him pregnant! He didn't know himself until Jeffrey told him earlier today!" one nurse claimed.

"No, you two are wrong!" a third nurse intervened: "The Eel is a transvestite! He's equipped with both sets!" As the group of nurses laughed joyously to the third woman's explanation Aaron Shutt decided to butt in.

"Excuse me, ladies," he said in a cold tone as his heavy gaze fell onto one particular of the nurses, his wife: "Camille, Alan is one of our friends. I can't believe you would participate in discussing this poor man's downfall like this! And secondly, you are nurses. Still you stand here making up mumbo jumbo that makes me honestly worry about the skills you possess! Is this the way you want to be seen by your patients? As a flock of gibbering women who talks as if they knew nothing about Modern Medicine at all???"

Camille lowered her golden mane shamefully.

"No..." she and the rest of the nurses around her sighed. Aaron gave them a glare worthy enough to descend from the pope himself before he left them, heading for Jeffrey's office. Since Jeffrey Geiger was his best friend and had been announced as the great discoverer of this whole madness he reckoned \*he\* was the one that could give him the true version of it all. Aaron was as Jeffrey a man in his midst forties, with grey specks growing by the root of his hair, indicating a midlife crisis not too far away.

"Tell me it isn't true!" he commanded as he stomped into Jeffrey's office. Jeffrey looked up, but there was no surprise in his face.

"Tell you what isn't true?" he asked as he put down the papers he had been reading.

"Tell me that Alan isn't pregnant, that this is the worst version of a Aprils 1st you've ever come up with!" Aaron begged as he dumped down into a chair, rubbing his temples frantically. A smirk appeared on Jeffrey's lips.

"Actually, it's true, and I've got the pictures from Alan's Ultra Sound to prove it!" He handed Aaron a picture, picturing the very first baby to be carried forth by a man. Aaron glared at the picture in

silence for a minute. Then he tossed it back down on the desk and moaned.

"Tell me it isn't true!" he repeated: "Tell me that the only one in this hospital that actually would have denied any other man, when Philip's not considered -that is-, hasn't intentionally done this to himself!"

"Dreyford did. The old bat lured him into a trap. Alan is a lonely man, so he figured the old hag could bring some joy to his life. Then she died and Alan picked up the pieces and continued to be pregnant without telling anyone." Jeffrey was annoyingly good when it came to giving reports in report form.

"So Alan is carrying Marion Dreyford's offspring?!?!" Aaron mucked. He never had savoured any soft spots for that prudent bone bag of a woman.

"Of course not! Alan might be naïve, but he's not blind!" Jeffrey denied with a frown on his forehead: "The egg came from an anonymous donor, Dreyford simply made the egg and Alan's sperm meet!" Aaron shook his head in heavy disbelief.

"How's Philip taking it?" he asked. Jeffrey laughed.

"How do you *\*think\** Philip would take it?! He's mad as hell! He tossed me out of his office half an hour ago when I came to show him the Polaroid of Birch Jr.! He's already arranged to try out the case in court, he wants to have the brat put down! The foetus that is, not Alan, although he's quite upset when it comes to him as well," Jeffrey said as he gave the picture of Birch's unborn daughter another glance.

"Well, no wonder Philip's upset!" Aaron stated: "Alan's gone behind the entire hospital's back! What he's done will have after-effects for all of us! What if we get shut down because we're playing Frankenstein?! I can't believe Alan would be so selfish!"

"He's a lonely man, Aaron. Loneliness can do strange things to people. Besides, you should listen to him talk about it, he honestly wants this child," Jeffrey said and crossed his arms across his chest. "You have to admit he's brave, daring to go through with all of this!"

"Brave... or stupid..." Aaron sighed: "Just wait until the press gets a hold of this... There won't be much left of Alan when they're through with him..."

\*\_\*

And as Aaron had predicted, when the media smelled blood they attacked... Alan was hiding in his office late afternoon as he worked up the courage to go out and face the world. Now everybody knew, everybody in the hospital, everybody working in the media. Eight days from now he would fight his hardest battle yet in the courtroom. Philip had worked swiftly and forced the case in the front of the line. It was an urgent case, where the one in question, Alan, had to be protected from his own insanity. Alan didn't know what to say when a messenger delivered the papers to him. And when he found the signature of Philip Watters on the last line he burst into tears again. Many tears had been shed this fateful day, but none as bitter as these.

The phone had been ringing off the hook from the moment the news had been broadcasted outside the borders of Chicago Hope. Nosy journalists wanted a piece of the pie. Finally Alan pulled out the cord from the phone, driven to a nervous wreck by all the ringing. No one had come to see him the entire day after the news was known, except from Billy Kronk. The young doctor had more or less spit in his face and yelled about Alan making him sick to his stomach and so forth and so forth before he'd left, slamming the door so hard it was about to fall off its hinges. At least he showed his reaction. Everybody else seemed to cower in shadows. Jeffrey was the only one who'd offered him some sort of support thus far. At least he hadn't condemned

him immediately as Philip had, he showed Alan the courtesy of letting him explain himself. He was scheduled for a psychiatric evaluation early tomorrow. Alan wondered what kind of mental state he would be in, given the probability of him not sleeping much the following night.

Finally he dared his way out of his office. Snide side looks followed him through the corridors and all the way out on the streets where journalists waited like sharks.

"No comment!!!" Alan howled as he prayed the nearest Taxi.

"Can you confirm the alleged pregnancy. Mr. Birch?"

"How far along are you, Mr. Birch?"

"What made you do it, Mr. Birch?"

"Do you expect to win the case, Mr. Birch?"

"No comment!" Alan repeated for the hundredth time as he slammed the taxi door in the faces of the crowd cornering him.

\*\_\*

Luckily no journalists had barricaded the entrance of his apartment, and Alan could pace down the halls in blessed solitude. He locked the door and pulled the phone off the wall, afraid the same racked would start all over again if he waited too long. He ran around, making sure all the windows were shut and with curtains drawn, before he dumped down on the floor, too exhausted to even move to his own bed. Alan sat there, back against the wall with closed eyes, only concentrating on breathing as he tried to brace himself for what had to come. It had only just begun... There would be a lot of attention from the media during the trial and in the weeks before the delivery if Alan ever got that far. Of course the world would be intrigued by reading about a weird little man who went behind his colleagues' backs to create his own Frankenstein Jr.! As a lawyer Alan knew what to expect. But it wasn't less frightening knowing what he had in stall.

Alan had no idea of how long he'd been sitting on the floor. He barely reacted when the sound of his cell phone started ringing inside the briefcase standing by the door. Probably another reporter... Both his legs had fallen asleep during his stay down on the hard floor and Alan stumbled towards his briefcase with great discomfort. It was probably just another reporter. But maybe, just maybe it was Philip. This small hope was enough for Alan to go after it. Disappointment painted his face when he didn't recognize the number on the display and he tossed over the floor in sheer agony. He needed somebody to stand by him now; he was too weak to go through this alone!

*Alan sunk down on the sofa and was blessed with immediate release.*

[Back to index](#)

*Chapter 4 by lydkiya*

*Sweet slumber of no dreams... Alan had slept heavily the whole night through, not disturbed by his ringing cell phone. He awoke as he recognized the sound of knocking on his door, and he shot out of the sofa as he realized that he might have overslept to the psychiatric evaluation he was scheduled for this morning.*

*"Alan, are you in there?" a familiar voice yelled. Alan rushed to the door and opened it, still with confusion plastered to his drowsy face.*

*"Jeffrey???" He stared dumbly on the man standing outside in the hallway with a smile on his face.*

*"Alan, you look like crap!" he stated as he walked into the apartment and let Alan lock the door after him. Alan stared at him as if he didn't believe his own eyes.*

*"What are you \*doing\* here?" he asked with his forehead in a frown. Then his features turned into panic.*

*"What time is it???" he squealed and rushed towards the bathroom.*

*"Don't worry, you have two hours till your little appointment!" Jeffrey assured from the living room: "And I'm here to make sure you make that appointment. I would advise you to change clothes, that suit you're wearing looks like you've slept in it!"*

*"That's because I \*have\*!" Alan yelled back as he squirted cold water into his face. Jeffrey was right, he looked like crap... The print of one of the sofa cushions was etched into his left cheek and his eyes were red and sore. Alan reckoned he needed a miracle to convince a psychiatric board of his sanity in this state.. And as if that wasn't enough he would be nauseous and moody due to the hormone shot he just took.*

*As Alan hurried over to the bedroom where he kept his clothes he couldn't help but wonder \*why\* Jeffrey was standing in his living room right now, glaring at one of Alan's paintings hanging on the wall. What was his interest in all of this? Why would he care about Alan making his appointment with a bunch of shrinks or not? As he dressed a sudden sting to his abdomen ordered him to calm down.*

*"Don't you starting acting up on me as well!" Alan muttered towards his belly as he buttoned his shirt.*

*"Are you talking to your tummy, Alan?" Jeffrey asked from the living room. Dammit that man had the hearing of a hare!*

*"I was talking to myself!" Alan said as he stepped into the living room, struggling with the knot of his tie.*

*"Sure, if you say so." Jeffrey raised his shoulders: "Are you ready?"*

*"Yes... I think so..." Alan said as he picked up his briefcase and the cell phone he found under an armchair. He had a nagging feeling that he'd forgotten something, but what...*

*"Wait!" he yelled as he realised what he'd forgotten. Jeffrey took his hand of the doorknob.*

*"What?!" Alan dropped his briefcase and hurried back to the bedroom.*

*"I forgot to put on the corset!" Jeffrey walked after him and yanked him away from the closet before Alan had the chance to open it.*

*"You don't need it any more, Alan. Everybody knows, remember?" he said and patted his shoulder. Jeffrey looked down on the visible bulk hiding behind the lawyer's jacket.*

*"It's time you let Junior roam free," he added with a crooked smile. Alan drew a deep breath and braced himself.*

*"Well, I guess it's time to meet the world, then.." he mumbled and walked outside the door with his back not as straight as usual.*

*\*\_\**

*"What the hell are you doing, supporting Alan like this!!!" Philip Watters' fury had no end these days, and now it was Jeffrey's turn to taste the heat.*

*"He's one man against the world, he's scared. He has no family, and he needs someone to back him up," Jeffrey simply answered, not intimidated by the hissing Puerto Rican sitting in front of him.*

*"You're encouraging him to continue this lunacy!" Philip barked and slammed a fist to his desk. Jeffrey raised his eyebrows.*

*"I'm not encouraging anything! Alan is only a man, he needs some backup. Under this kind of pressure anyone might buckle."*

*"If you'd stayed out of this Alan would have agreed to go along with the abortion by now!" Philip wouldn't budge. He hadn't spoken a word to Alan since yesterday and wasn't going to either. Not until Alan had come to his senses. That Jeffrey had interfered and showed Alan some support drove Philip's plan to the ground. As long as no one had stepped forward and showed Alan some kindness he would have realized his error and gone along with the abortion. Cruel but effective. But of course the great Jeffrey Geiger finally decided to show some decency for a change and that when it was his cruelty Philip had hoped for.*

*"Why are you getting so upset by this, Philip? It's not like Alan's murdered someone or anything!" Jeffrey said with his arms across his chest. Philip glared at him.*

*"Alan's a man. Men don't give birth to children!"*

*"So it's a biblical thing?" Jeffrey asked and tilted his head. Philip's cheeks went red with fury in an instant.*

*"Of course it's a biblical thing!" he yelled: "And it's unnatural and it's not allowed!!! Alan deliberately went behind my back, Jeffrey! I'm not going to forget that! I trusted that man, he was like a son to me!"*

*"I had a son once. He died two years old, but he still did the wrong things sometimes, even when he knew daddy wouldn't approve," Jeffrey said with raised shoulders: "Children makes the wrong choices sometimes, and it's the parents' job to support them no matter what." Philip's eyes became narrowed little slits.*

*"Don't patronize me, Jeffrey!" he snarled through gritted teeth: "I will never approve of what Alan has done, never!"*

*\*\_\**

*Alan's day went by in a haze. To his great shock a stranger was seated by the desk when he entered his own office. Apparently Philip had decided it was time Alan went on maternity leave...*

*"You must be the expectant mum!" the tall man with an abundance of gold rings on his fingers announced as Alan took one hesitant step into what once had been his office.*

*"I'm Gregory Deck, I'm here to substitute for you while you are given a indefinite leave of absence. I tried to call you last night but you never answered the phone..." He held out his hand towards Alan.*

*"Oh." Alan wished he could vanish into thin air: "I guess I'll be on my way then."*

*"Alright, see you in court!" Mr. Deck said and dived back down into a considerable large sized*

*pile of papers.*

*"Excuse me... what?" Alan turned in confusion. The bald-headed man lifted his gaze lazily.*

*"I will also be leading the case against you. Philip told me you would represent yourself, admirable!" he said in the kind of stuck up friendly tone that only a million dollar lawyer would use. Alan crept out of his office with his tail between his legs. How much humiliation could he take? And how much money was Philip spending on breaking Alan's spirit??"*

*Jeffrey bumped into him down the hall, and Alan jerked away as if he'd been burned. He was afraid of being snapped at again.*

*"Hey, relax Alan! I'm not gonna bite you!" Jeffrey assured and patted Alan's shoulder.*

*"I'm.. I'm sorry!" Alan excused: "I think I'm a little off today.." He rubbed his neck and gazed into thin air as he often did when he was trying to think.*

*"Just remember to breathe and you'll be alright!"*

*"It's easy for you to say, you haven't had your brain evaluated by three scowling psychiatrists!" Alan moaned, and remembered his meeting earlier that morning. An eyebrow rose to the air as Jeffrey looked down at him.*

*"Insane elevator man, remember?" he said with poorly hidden sarcasm. Alan's cheeks went red.*

*"Oh, you're right!" he squealed: "How could I forget that!?" Jeffrey chuckled.*

*"Don't you just hate it when they use the word \*describe\* when they want you to spill your guts?!" he added and shook his head. Alan's eyes went vivid:*

*"I can't stand that!!" Alan agreed, gesturing both hands to his head: "And I \*hate\* the superior tone they always use, as if they know everything that goes on inside your brain!"*

*"Exactly!" Jeffrey nodded: "They make you feel like a tick!" They both chuckled to this, and then the awkward silence that always appeared when they ran out of things to say came. Alan stood frozen for a few seconds, not knowing what to say.*

*"I'll better get on my way... I have a doctor's appointment in five minutes.." he mumbled shyly.*

*"Yeah, better get on my way my self.. busy schedule!" Jeffrey said and gave Alan a nod.*

*"There's just one more thing..." he added, making Alan stop.*

*"I would consider buying some new clothes if I were you. The ones you have seem to be getting a little too tight around the waist.." he said with a smirk before he hurried down the halls again. Alan gaped at him, at first not liking what the heart surgeon was inclining, but then he took a second look, down on his pouting stomach and decided Jeffrey was right. During the period he'd worn the corset Alan's clothes fit easily, but now it was easy to see that Alan was growing too big for his old suits.*

*\*\_\**

*Later that same day Alan learned that lawyer Deck had called for a press conference the following day, without inviting Alan. Just as fine, actually, Alan wasn't ready to confess his pregnancy for the whole world yet. Besides, Philip would probably be there, and Alan wasn't ready to face him either. But the rumours about his pregnancy seemed gullible enough for most*

reporters as they still were swarming the hospital like rats smelling blood. Alan half expected them to come bursting through the walls when he was at his first appointment with the doctor that would be in charge of his pregnancy for the time being. Melissa Gargoyle was the unpleasant name of an unpleasant woman. She looked like she was handling a disgusting snail during her examination of Alan.

After an hour of pricks, Ultra Sounds, measuring, weighing and other pregnancy related things she declared him healthy as a fish, except from a high blood pressure, and sent him on his way with the following message.

"You're not a woman, Mr. Birch, you're not supposed to be graced with such a condition. There are thousands of women out there I would rather help having a baby than you! You make me sick, the way you alter the rules to your own advantage!"

Alan said nothing in his defence. He was too busy preparing his mind for the coming day. The pressure from the media was already quite high from the tabloids, but Alan could add ten times the pressure by this time tomorrow, when the ones that considered themselves the serious part of media would start the race to have exclusivity to the story about the sad little man who went against nature. He'd already handed over all the papers he'd conveniently removed from Dreyford's office, knowing any refusal to do so would end up in suing and accusing him of stealing hospital property.

It was quite a surprise for Alan to discover that so far Jeffrey Geiger was his only support. Everybody else avoided him like Typhoid. He'd accidentally crossed the path of Aaron Shutt, and he'd pretended he didn't see him at all. Alan soon realized he had nothing to do in Chicago Hope as it were now. His job was taken from him, and the scowls he received by everybody that graced him with a glare as he passed by was enough to scare any man to a life behind bars.

So Alan decided to give everybody the break they seemed to need, and to go to some clothing stores, and have that problem out of the way before the journalists and TV-teams started to follow at his heels. Now, shopping for clothes had never been much fun for Alan, and this day proved no different. A lawyer has to dress respectable, and that means fitting clothes. Everything Alan tried on was either too tight in the waist or had to long arms and legs.

"Don't worry, I'll have that fixed for you by tomorrow if you're in a hurry!" the expiditian slash tailor assured with a winning smile.

"Am I right if I guess that you're a lawyer?" he asked smugly as he started to fold the arms of the jacket Alan was trying on. Alan glared at his own reflection in the mirror. He looked older than his thirtyour years. These last couple of days had left their mark on him. He seemed to have lost the trusty look that always had stood by him no matter how many times he'd been let down. The last drop, he reckoned. Sooner or later he would have to loose his faith to this world.

"I have a big trial coming up next Friday. I need at least seven new suits ready to then and delivered at my apartment. Do you think you can handle that?" Alan didn't even look at the man as he spoke. He was too afraid to discover recent in another human being's eyes.

"Sure can, Mr. Birch! You just show me what suits you want and let me measure you and I'll start working on them right away!" the corpulent man beamed. He looked like he just had won the state fare.

\*\_\*

Alan sat in front of the TV set in the living room of his apartment, hand resting on top of his stomach. The press conference on Chicago Hope started in two minutes, and it seemed like every major TV- channel was airing what was guessed to be a major medical break through.

"I guess you'll be on everybody's lips tonight, sweetie," he addressed his unborn daughter as a certain Gregory Deck appeared on the TV-screen. What was that, a Gucci-suit?! And behind the overpaid lawyer, on his left, Philip was standing, face grey as ashen.

"He looks as terrible as me," Alan mumbled, rubbing his cheek half in surprise. After some seconds of silence, Mr. Deck opened his mouth.

"Good day, ladies and gentlemen! I've called for this press conference today to shed light to a rumour that seems to have been circulating both in Chicago Hope and the media the last couple of days. First of all I want to make it perfectly clear that what I'm about to reveal is the solemn act of the late scientist Marion Dreyford, who died tragically in a car accident some months ago. Secondly, and this is important; this woman did not act with Chicago Hope's medical board's permission, this is the act of this woman alone!"

"Cut to the case!" someone down in the audience yelled. A slight blush appeared on the lawyer's cheeks before he continued.

"A couple of days ago Philip Watters, the hospital manager, learned that Ms. Dreyford indeed went through with her plans and started testing out an unauthorised pregnancy on a male subject in the months before she died." A roar of mumbling could be heard and Alan immediately decided not to take a step outside his apartment until the trial had begun.

"This pregnancy was never meant to be, and the hospital board has decided it best to be terminated immediately. Unfortunately the test subject denies to end the pregnancy, and this has forced Watters to go to trial against Chicago Hope's former lawyer, Mr. Alan Birch."

Alan turned off the TV. So Mr. Deck just *\*had\** to mention his full name, didn't he! He would have people running down his apartment in matter of minutes. That sly son of a bitch!

"Well, I'd just as well get started on our defence, don't you think?" he said as he checked one last time that he had locked the entrance door and headed out to his home office.

\*\_\*

The day of the trial finally arrived. Alan had been living in a nightmare of pushy journalists and TV-crews constantly calling him for a statement or an interview. And when they realised he didn't answer his phone they started knocking on his door instead. He received daily hate mail from people who hoped he would burn in hell and so forth for his deadly sin. Alan even had groups of angry women marching outside his window, screaming towards the man who'd dared to steal women's most precious gift. Banners like "God made women for a reason, stop eradicating us!" and "The Devil's seed must die!" was waved towards Alan's window up in the third floor with much excitement and dedication. Little sleep was granted the weary lawyer as he prepared for the trial of his life, and by the arrival of the eight and final day, a little seed of doubt had been planted in his mind.

Maybe Philip had a point. What kind of life could Alan offer his daughter in a world that was already treating her like a freak?

[Back to index](#)

Chapter 5 by lydkiya

The moment had arrived, for Alan's closing statement. Mr Deck had just finished his, urging the court to look beyond Alan's attempts of giving the foetus he was carrying a face. It was simply an object of an experiment that never should have taken place, and therefore it had to be put down. Alan was shaking all over as he had to listen to this man condemning his daughter.

He entered the floor, pulse racing away in his chest. Alan could feel his daughter's frantic



movements as he stopped at the center, knowing this was his last chance to influence the decision that was to be made later this fateful day.

"I am a lonely man," he said, a sad smile underlining his words as his eyes swept across the room.

"My days rush by in a haze, grey, dull, lonely... I try to blend in and to be one of the guys, but still nothing can change the fact that I'm different, I'm not a part of the group. I don't have many friends.. In fact I believe everybody I can call my friends are located in this very courtroom today."

No one dared to meet his gaze as he looked one last time for some comfort. Alan continued to pace as he let the courtroom have a peek at his loneliness:

"I call them my friends, and they even have a pet name for me, The Eel," he said, noting Jeffrey smiling from his seat: "Strangely enough I've grown to like it over the years. They say pet names is a sign of love, and as the Eel, at least I know my life at Chicago Hope is noticed. Sadly my condition may have ended most of the friendships I have, and for that I am truly sorry, for I knew to full extent what the consequences of my actions would be if I went ahead with the pregnancy. Still I went ahead and did the crime, knowing I would loose most of my precious friends in the process." Alan had to take a deep breath before he continued, struggling with the promise of tears if he halted too long.

"I wanted this child. I wanted it so much I decided to carry her forth my self when I got the chance. Not the wisest decision I've made, I'm sure. But I don't regret it for one second! I may have been wrong in my choices, I may have acted upon selfishness and loneliness, but you can't sentence the child I'm carrying to death because of *\*my\** sin! There's a limit for abortions, and this is passed with several weeks, the only way to end the pregnancy now is by murder. If the hospital have grudges against my acting in this case they should punish *\*me\** and not my daughter. At twenty-six weeks an unborn child is fully developed. The last remaining three months she grows and her lungs and heart matures to manage life on the outside. For me, personally, it's terrifying to think that Chicago Hope are willing to kill a child that have nothing what so ever with this to do at all. If she'd been carried forth by a woman she'd been safe from any hospital board in the world, protected even from her mother. My daughter isn't granted this right, why? If you're going punish somebody for this, then punish me! I went into this with open eyes, accepting what Ms. Dreyford was offering me. But don't, I say DON'T kill my baby girl for the mistakes her father is responsible for!"

There, now it was up to the judge, Alan could do no more.

\*\_\*

The recess went by in a fog of mixed emotions. Alan spent most of the time in the men's room, simply sitting inside a locked stall to get some peace. He was so stressed out that his chest was aching, and Alan was worried his blood pressure was rising to new levels. First now he started to consider what would happen to him if he lost the case. If so he would have lost everything, both his life at Chicago Hope and his daughter. There would be nothing left to live for...

He had no idea of how long he'd been sitting there when Jeffrey entered the neighbor stall and announced that the judge was on his way back in.

Alan thought and rose on shaky legs. He patted his stomach for luck, and went outside, not knowing what would meet him as he entered the courtroom. Thankfully he wasn't the last one to enter the room, the judge was still missing... Alan sat down, trembling all over in nervousity. The courtroom was boiling with tension that silenced as soon as the wrinkled face of judge Aldrich appeared from a sidedoor back in the room. He dragged himself to his chair with a smirk on his face. Alan shuddered. Was that a good or a bad sign??

*Finally the judge sat down, and after an elaborate pause he finally opened his mouth.*

*"In my days as a judge I've never come across a case as ludicrous as this!" he started, bending over his desk to look down on his audience.*

*"When men starts to give birth to children I seriously consider withdrawing from office! What kind of hospital are you running, Mr. Watters who don't notice a pregnant \*man\* walking around your halls?! Look at the little toad, it's plainly obvious something's going on; he looks like he's swallowed a beach ball for crying out loud! And you, Mr. Birch- as a lawyer I shouldn't expect much more. So you're lonely, boohoo, so you want to become father... Have you ever heard of the term \*dating\*??! But noo.. the smug lawyer knows his way around the law, the smug little toad decides to do it himself! The martyr of all men who wants to become a single parent! Why in God's name would you run the risk of suffering from all these awful medical conditions these doctors have been referring to all day? The experts can say what they will, but for a man to even consider the hardships of carrying a baby to term he has to be utterly mad!!!"*

*Alan felt his stomach sink down to his heels. He was loosing! He couldn't believe it, he was loosing! He stared at the old man who stared back at him as he continued his speech without flinching.*

*"Yes, Mr. Birch- I consider you mad!!!! You're equally mad with all the women around this country bringing children to this world where the dogs eat the dogs! But no matter how much it repulses me that you've actually managed to knock your self up I can't find one smidge of reason as to condemn the unlucky child you're carrying to death. Maybe it is too bad for the baby.. but I can't sentence a child to death because her parent isn't of the right gender. Therefore I have no choice but to judge in favor of the defendant! I hope your ankles get so swollen you can't walk, you weird little toad! And keep out of my courtroom while you're breastfeeding!" And with that closure to his closing statement, old judge Aldrich left the courtroom that erupted into a chaos beyond anyone's imagination.*

*Alan sat like frozen for five minutes, so moved he'd forgotten how to use his legs. His daughter had been saved after all! From now on all of Alan's life would circle around his daughter, making sure she would get the best life possible. If that ruled him out of the picture he was willing to accept it, but he still had hope he would spend the future together with her.*

*Finally he got to his feet, closing his briefcase with shivering hands as the courtroom emptied behind his back. A horde of media people would attack him the second he left this room, but Alan didn't care. His daughter was safe, that was all that mattered! So filled with emotions, Alan didn't notice the man approaching him before he started talking.*

*"Alan.." Alan turned in surprise, a confused smile forming on his face as he recognized the man standing opposite him.*

*"I didn't believe you would ever talk to me again, Philip?" he asked. There was no hostility or bitterness in his voice, just surprised happiness. But no redemption floated to the surface in Philip Watters' dark eyes.*

*"I still intend to speak to you as little as possible Alan. But I'm not going to stand on the sideline and let you kill yourself with your stupidity! You're admitting yourself to the hospital at once; you're staying off your feet as much as possible the next months. When the child is born you can leave and never set foot in Chicago Hope again." With these words Philip turned and left, stubborn bitterness rushing his footsteps.*

*The smile had vanished from Alan's face.*

\*\_\*

"Here's your room Mr. Birch!" The nurse was stern looking and brief. Alan felt like he had joined some crazy hospital marathon, running around in the corridor trying to keep in touch with the speeding nurse.

"Wow!" he gaped as he entered the room and realized he had been granted a single room, something very rare on the maternity ward.

"Are you sure there hasn't been a mistake in the system somewhere?" he said as he looked around; bright blue eyes taking in the luxury: "I mean, I'm only twenty-six weeks along I wouldn't be the one taking this room from someone who's in more need of privacy, I wouldn't mind sharing." But his bright smile soon dampened when he met the sour glare from the fern nurse.

"Mr. Watters decided you would stay in a single room. It would be upsetting for the expecting mothers to share a room with you. You'll find your hospital coat on the bed there. Meals are listed on the sheet of paper stapled to the door. Good day Mr. Birch!"

"Learn when to shut up, Alan!" he mumbled to himself as the door slammed shut. He was occupying women's territory now, as a stranger in a foreign land. With a sigh he had another look on the white-painted room where he would spend the next months and picked up the garment he was going to wear for the next weeks. Pink. Of course he would be given the only \*pink\* hospital coat Chicago Hope had to offer... He wouldn't be much surprised if Jeffrey had ordered it especially for him...

Half an hour later he was tugging said hospital coat with a frown on his forehead. Of course \*his\* coat was missing some seems, something that caused it to show half his back and most of his ass... Still he hadn't been able to lay down on the bed, though. It felt unnatural for him to lie down in this state. He didn't feel much discomfort, and he was a man used to little or less spare time. What was he going to do for two bloody months?!?!? Gregory Deck stayed on as General Counsellor for the hospital, and according to Philip Alan no longer had a job at Chicago Hope. Alan only hoped Deck was more than a smug grin and expensive habits. He wouldn't stand see Chicago Hope run to the ground by this guy!

As he stood there, on the floor, not really knowing what to do another nurse entered the room. Alan spun around, trying to cover his displayed back with a shameful smile.

"Camille, what a surprise!" he exclaimed.

Aaron Shutt's wife gave him a quick, nervous looking smile as she hurried towards the bed where his charts hang.

"You should be in bed, Alan!" she said as she scurried about, checking the windows, the bathroom, the bed...

"Yes, I know.. but it feels awkward going to bed when I feel just fine." His grin grew as she started fluffing the pillows on the bed. She looked restless, like some deer smelling a hunter.

"Well, you should lay down anyway," she answered quickly, and suddenly Alan understood.

"You don't want to be in this room at all, do you?" he stated as she made sure the sheets on the bed were perfectly folded.

"What do you mean?" she snorted, trying to smile him off: "Why should this make me feel uncomfortable?"

*"I don't know, maybe you should tell me," Alan answered. He was fed up with everybody of some influence in his life avoiding him. Now it was time for some answers. Camille sighed, apparently knowing her cover was blown.*

*"I simply can't get used to the thought that you are... that you're..."*

*"pregnant," Alan gently finished for her. She drew a deep breath.*

*"Yes," it came heavily: "I seem to have some problems with accepting that you should be granted the possibility to have a baby when there's so many women out there who'll never have that opportunity."*

*"Thank you for your honesty, Camille," Alan said and patted her shoulder, before he clumsily crawled into bed.*

*"I'm sorry Alan, I try to be happy for you, but... I'm just jealous I guess..." A sad smile appeared on Camille's face as she tucked the lawyer in.*

*"I wish you all the best, Alan."*

*\*\_\**

*The first night in a hospital bed is always the worst. Alan struggled to catch some sleep, but after spending most of the night in bed already he wasn't the least drowsy. He ended up watching TV, and was repeatedly shown reports from the trial earlier that day. Was it really just some hours since he'd walked out of the courtroom? It felt like ages ago.. Now Alan was being imprisoned in the hospital for his own good, bored out of his wits already. At least Camille would bring him some crossword puzzles tomorrow to keep him occupied, and he was scheduled for several tests.*

*"But I have \*you\* to keep me company, haven't I?" he murmured towards the bulk beneath the blanket. His daughter was stirring and acting restless tonight, probably reacting to all the adrenalin that had been floating around in Alan's system most of the day.*

*Four different newspapers had offered him enormous sums of money for the exclusivity of his story. Three TV-stations wished to make a Documentary on him. Alan had turned them all down, even with an uncertain future, when money's concerned, ahead of him. He'd put away a nice little sum during the years and reckoned he had enough saved to go two years without working if he had to. There was no way he was going to sell his little girl to benefit on it financially!*

*"Just the two of us," he whispered softly and brushed the top of his belly, humming an old nursery rhyme. He'd won the battle, now all he had to do was endure the following weeks. It would be the easiest task of his life!*

*\*\_\**

*He was wrong. He'd never been more mistaken in his entire life! Alan hated lying immobile in a hospital bed like some invalid Vietnam Veteran. After three and a half weeks he was ready to climb the walls! He'd grown considerably around the waist on those short weeks, and that only made him more desperate to get out of bed and get some exercise. It couldn't do his blood pressure or the baby any good to lay cooped up like this. Day in and day out he spent glaring on white hospital walls, hoping for visitors that never came. Camille showed up on a regular basis, though, as a nurse. Jeffrey was nowhere to be seen, neither was Philip, and Alan wasn't really surprised. He was some dirty little secret tucked away in a room, and it seemed like the surroundings tried to forget about his presence. And as his discomfort in feeling useless and forgotten rose, his blood pressure rose with him. This only added more to the load, and Alan was*

worried sick about how Deck was running the hospital in his absence.

Finally he couldn't stand the uncertainty any more and called Deck with his hospital phone by the bed.

"You've come to Mr. Deck's office, what can I help you with?" a woman's voice answered.

"This is Alan Birch, I wish to speak with Mr. Deck, please."

"I'm sorry, Mr. Birch, but Mr. Deck is in a meeting right now. Can I take a message?"

"Yes, would you please notify him that I would like a meeting with him? He knows where to find me," Alan answered and hang up, still feeling restless.

"I sure wish I could stay up more, pumpkin," he said as his daughter turned inside him: "It's not much exercise going to the toilet and back, and I have to ask permission every time I'm having a shower. No respect!"

\*\_\*

Alan was about to drift into a nap, the only enjoyable thing to do in his boredom. Laying on his back, his hospital coated belly exposed, he felt relaxed and even contempt. He had one of his better days for a change, and the discomfort brought along with a distended gut didn't bug him at all. In his state of half sleep his subconscious mind was stirred as the door to his room was silently opened and closed.

"Camille?" he mumbled as he turned his head lazily towards the direction of the sound. A tired smile broke on his face as he opened his eyes to welcome whatever nurse who had entered his room. His heart stopped.

"Standing by the door a man Alan never had laid eyes on before glared back at him, with something that couldn't be interpreted as much else than loathing and hate in his eyes. Fear struck Alan as his eyes caught the reflection of something glinting in the stranger's hand.

"Who are you?! What are you doing here?!"

He held a knife. Alan felt panic hit him like a ton of bricks as a horrible smile rose upon the face of the intruder. He reached for his call button but the stranger stopped him with one fierce move with his knife.

"Don't. Move!" he snarled and slowly crept closer. There was no way of escape for Alan. All he could do to move further away from the intruder was to sit up in the bed.

"What do you want?" His voice was barely audible. He'd received some pretty nasty emails lately, and Alan knew there were many people out there not happy for his condition. Black eyes peered at him as the stranger slowly approached him, knife in front of him as a warning.

"Please, take my money.. I keep them in that closet over there... but don't hurt me!" Alan didn't beg for his own life, he prayed for the safety of his daughter.

"I want no money!" the stranger hissed, and Alan forgot how to breathe. He wrapped his hands protectively around his waist knowing he was a sitting duck completely in the mercy of a maniac with a knife..

"You're carrying the spawn of Satan! Doomsday is upon us all!" A hideous scar ran from the left side of the stranger's forehead and down to the right side of his chin.

*"Please... don't hurt my daughter!" Alan whispered, still backing towards the grind of the bed in hopeless desperation. Dark eyes laughed at him in superiority as filthy hands grabbed a hold of the fabric of Alan's hospital coat. The cold steel from the blade of the knife could be felt through the fabric before it was ripped apart in one harsh move. Naked skin shone towards the man whose face lit up in a demonic smile.*

*"Please, Sir I beg you! Don't hurt my.." Alan begun but never finished the sentence as a sharp blow to his jaw shut him up. So this was it then. He was about to be slain in a hospital bed, supposedly the safest place on earth for someone in his condition. Alan's eyes filled with tears as he realised the horrible facts. But still he covered his defenceless stomach the best he could, his arms getting sliced in the process. The colour red towards white bed sheets. And then a burning sensation started to spread from one side of his stomach and over to the next. At least the stranger wasn't jabbing, he was just cutting in the top of Alan's stomach, as if he was engraving something to his skin.*

*A last, horrible plan formed in Alan's head as the dreadful truth peered inside his brain and showed him the only option. His face contorted in agony as he tried to protect his belly one more time, concentrating on covering the middle where he could feel his daughter's frantic moves.*

*"HEEEELP!!!" he cried as loud as his pain stung lungs were able to. Once more he received a blow from the stranger's fist as he cursed and snarled.*

*"HEEEEEELP!!!" he cried again, and the miracle happened. The stranger finally panicked. Alan could hear the knife being tossed across the room where it hit the wall, and the door was ripped open as his attacker escaped. Nurses started shouting. Alan slowly opened his eyes, shaking all over as it all rushed through his mind.*

*"Oh my god! What's happened to you!?" He heard the voice, but he couldn't see the person saying it although she was no doubt standing right beside him. Everything went black. He couldn't breathe, hands clasping to his chest, moaning, panting, crying.. People rushed to, and Alan still wasn't able to see. He stared blindly out in the room, chest heaving for breath as the panic attack that wrenched his mind, made it impossible to think. But he still was able to feel and to hear. Warm and moist..*

*"The guy sliced him up pretty good!"*

*A rattle went through his chest as he gave in to madness and cried, all his misery and grief was pushed up his throat. The stranger had killed his daughter after all..*

*\*\_\**

*Philip Watters kept in his office most of the days he wasn't attending surgery. This whole business with Alan had caught him off guard, and the aging man had crept into his shell and wasn't able to find his way back outside. He had never been fair with Alan. The boy drew himself too hard, still Philip demanded more from him. He kept the hospital floating, he wasn't appreciated for all the hard work he actually did. Shuffling papers and long lunches.. That was what the doctor's of Chicago Hope, and often Philip as well, had believed Alan's work consisted of. It wasn't until he was gone Philip saw the enormous workload the young man carried on his shoulders. Gregory Deck did what he was told, but nothing more. The kindness and silent efficiency that was Alan's trade-mark was replaced with cold ruthlessness and media crawling when Deck joined the ship of Chicago Hope. But Philip wasn't one who admitted mistakes, and no matter how much Alan's skills as a lawyer was missed he still had betrayed Philip.*

*"Now what!" he hissed when his beeper told him to get to the maternity ward for an emergency. He reckoned Alan was suffering from haemorrhaging and needed emergency surgery, and*

*although there was no way in hell he was going to forgive Alan for his actions, his moral standards as a doctor sent him pacing down the hallways towards the west wing.*

*"On your way down to Alan?" Aaron Shutt met up with him in the corridors and joined him.*

*"Yes, any idea of what's going on?" Philip barked.*

*"Apparently he was attacked by some knife desperado.." Aaron told, in his usual slow manner. Philip stopped.*

*"WHAT?!?!?" His eyes squinted in disbelief.*

*"Camille said something about a man calling himself the avenger of God or something. The security guards caught him as he tried to escape a few minutes ago. Hasn't Deck notified you??"*

*Philip didn't answer. He put his energy in running the last bit of the way.*

*Alan's room was filled with nurses and doctors, mostly trying to hold the panicked man down. Alan looked terrible, blood poring from open gaps in his arms and his stomach, his face wrenched in horrible grimaces that clearly stated his hysteria.*

*"What the hell are you doing?" Philip bellowed as he entered the room, clearing a path to the bed with fierce elbows.*

*"He's hysterical; give him some sedatives for god's sake!" He had to pry Alan's right arm away from the stomach it was protecting, there was no sign of recognition in Alan's face as Philip faced him.*

*"Alan. Alan! Do you hear me? It's me, Philip!" he said, loud and clearly.*

*"Try to relax, Alan. You're safe now!" The magic words. Philip could feel the whole posture and tenseness of Alan's body change as the words reached him.*

*"Safe? Philip?" he croaked, blinking frantically.*

*"I.. I can't see... I can't see..." Philip leaned closer and started stroking Alan's hair with soft comforting strokes.*

*"Hush, boy. Just relax, you're safe now. You're safe now!" Slowly the frightened man started breathing easier as the panic slowly let go of his body, but still his left hand was clasped around his stomach.*

*"The baby.." he whispered after a while: "How is she? Is she all right?" Philip received an affirming nod from one of the obstetricians.*

*"She's just fine, Alan, just fine," Philip told him and continued to stroke his hair. Alan slowly opened his eyes, and this time recognition dawned in his watery gaze. The corners of his mouth bent downwards and he squinted his eyes once more as relief as much as fear washed over him.*

*"Thank God!" he whispered, hanging on to Philip like a scared child: "I thought I had lost her, Philip!"*

*"Don't you worry anymore, Alan. I've given you something to sleep on, and I'll see to that someone patches and cleans you up while you're resting." Philip embraced the shivering young*

man and could feel old grudges let go and disappear.

"Will.. you stay with me till I sleep?" Alan whimpered: "I'm afraid..."

"Of course I will, Alan. Sleep now," Philip hushed, as his heart started beating again.

\*\_\*

Alan slept for ten solid hours. The stress of the attack had drained him completely, and with the safety of having Philip nearby he found the peace he needed to fall asleep. Philip didn't move from his side the entire time, afraid of Alan waking up if he left him. He realised now what a *putsch* he'd been. Looking down on the weary face in the hospital bed Philip finally forgave Alan for his betrayal.

[Back to index](#)

Chapter 6 by lydkiya

Two weeks later Alan's wounds had healed well, and he was still waiting for a visit from his colleagues. Jeffrey had stopped by, Camille still did her duties as a nurse, but apart from that nothing had changed but from one detail. Philip stopped by his room to see how he was doing at least once a day now, and that was more than enough for Alan. He still acted uneasy about the whole pregnancy detail, but Alan easily saw that Philip tried his best to ignore his queasiness for Alan's sake. Alan had to admit he felt saddened by Philip's resentment towards his daughter, but figured that when he first laid eyes on her after she was born the stubborn old goat had to admit he'd been wrong.

She was starting to get cramped up for space now, inside him. Alan's skin had already stretched so much it hurt, but she still had another five weeks to go before she would be satisfied. The obstetrician was worrying about this and feared that Alan's abdomen wasn't big enough to contain a baby for as long as nine months. Therefore he decided they would decide from week to week when it was time for the C- section. The thought of getting it all over with as soon as possible appealed to Alan at first. He'd been locked up here for so long now, and the last couple of weeks even with police guarding his door. But then he started thinking about what would be best for the little one and decided he would give her as many weeks to grow yet as he could sustain. If that would mean withholding some information about tender areas, so be it. Alan could endure a little discomfort due to stretched skin for the sake of his daughter's wellbeing!

Besides, he'd found a way to at least make the nights shorten a little. The police guards only watched his door at day. Obviously they reckoned lunatics only strike in day time or something. That meant no one was watching if anyone came in, or went out in the evenings.. In late hours of the night Alan had started to sneak outside his room, heading further down in the maternity ward where he stopped by the glass with a view into the nursery.

In one of the late hours of night he got out of bed as usual, and snook as gracefully as an almost eight months pregnant man can down the hallways towards the room where his unborn daughter would be kept a few weeks into the future. Graced with a nice blue, dotted hospital coat and an odd walk Alan went the short distance from his room to the nursery. What had started as a hunt for a vending machine ended up in front of a window that displayed what would hopefully be his future. Alan stayed as long as he dared in front of this window every night, his heart melting by the sight of newborn infants squirming sleepily in their cribs. He'd been caught a few times, by busy nurses who'd ushered him most efficiently back to his room, but as long as they didn't tell Philip he would be fine. Alan would continue his nighttime adventures of sneaking out of bed and down the hallway to stand by the window and gaze on the tiny miracles.

He watched in silent awe as a tiny hand stretched towards the sky. So small. So helpless.. A hand brushed the home of his daughter as he fantasised about the first time he would hold her in his arms, take in her scent..



*"Alan! What are you doing out here?! You should be in bed!" Alan didn't need to turn or take his gaze away from the nursery to know Philip had found him.*

*"Relax Philip, I'm fine!" Alan assured, not taking his eyes from the window. He could hear Philip mumble something about stupid brats, but he didn't take it personally.*

*"Look at them," he told in marvel: "They are so tiny, so defenceless... so completely in our might. How come I've never stopped to wonder what miracle it really is, a life? A few weeks from now I'm going to be a father, Philip." Alan never noticed the look Philip's eyes gained as he spoke. He never noticed the curl on the older man's lips as he took part in Alan's joy for the first time since he'd learned about his pregnancy.*

*"I bet you'll make one hell of a daddy, Alan. Now get back to your room, nice and slow! I don't want you collapsing in the hallways at night!" Alan obeyed after casting one last longing gaze to the sleeping infants, then he turned and wobbled back to his room with Philip watching his every step.*

*\*\_\**

*"Do you feel any discomfort when I touch you here, Alan?" The obstetrician was poking his sides, and it was to say the least, uncomfortable.*

*"No, I feel just fine. A little tender, but nothing more," Alan replied, knowing he was stretching the truth a little. These daily checkups made him feel like a human piñata, but he appreciated the fact that his daughter was followed closely from day to day.*

*"How is she today, Doctor?" he asked as the obstetrician finished up his work and scribbled down some notes on Alan's charts.*

*"Just peachy! Heart rate and vitals are all good, the only thing she's complaining about is the lack of playground to roam around on," the doctor answered with a roguish smile. Michael Norton was the only obstetrician who didn't treat Alan as if he was infected with leprosy. As a father of five and blessed with looks the likes of George Clooney anyone passing Norton on the street would have guessed him to be a heart surgeon rather than an obstetrician.*

*"My main question is how \*you\* are doing, Alan. If you're starting to get too uncomfortable I suggest we schedule a C-section."*

*"I'm just fine, Doc. She's one feisty little girl and she tends to kick my intestines flat now and then, but it's nothing I can't take," Alan assured him as his rib most conveniently was strafed by a foot.*

*"Alright, I take your word for it Alan. But you will tell me if you feel it's time, right?" Norton asked as he put Alan's chart back by the end of his bed.*

*"I promise," Alan nodded with a smile on his face. He went through the same speech every time the Doctor made him a visit. Dr. Norton smiled and told Alan to take care before he headed for the door.*

*"Doc? Before you leave... There's one thing I was meaning to ask you..." Alan started and rubbed his neck.*

*"Yes?" The Doctor turned with friendly features.*

*"I was wondering if I could take a shower... It's been almost three weeks since the last time I had one. Not to complain about the nurses' sponge bathes, they most efficiently clean every corner of me even if I want them to or not... but I feel cleaner after a shower... if you know what I mean..?"*

Norton scratched his stubby chin for a moment.

"In this state of the pregnancy I would prefer rather if you not, but I won't deny you to take a shower. Just make sure you take it easy, Alan. A fall in the shower in your condition could be fatal for both you and the baby."

"I'll be careful!" Alan promised. All he wanted was to have warm water trickle down his aching back again, and not at least feel like he still was able to clean himself without the aid of a nurse.

\*\_\*

Like warm velvet against aching skin... Alan submerged into the warmth and comfort of a shower in a way he never would've believed was possible. If he'd had the strength he would have stood there for the rest of the day, eyes closed as he embraced his daughter. She seemed to enjoy the shower as well basking lazily towards the sudden warmth to the exterior of her home.

"You like that don't you?" Alan told his belly with a warm smile not affected by the water trickling down his face. He brushed his fingers over a particularly active and painful spot and was rewarded with an eager shove. Communicating with his unborn daughter felt natural for Alan, and he was consumed in his happiness with this blessed moment relived of all stress and worries that he didn't notice the woman watching him in secret from a glitch in the door.

Camille silently took in the sight of Alan's profile towards the see-through glass door of the shower. She watched how his hands tenderly stroke a distended abdomen with such love infested in every brush that she had to catch her breath. She intruded on a very special and tender moment, and she knew it. To see such manifestation of love in this man as she'd over the years had seen as the annoying little lawyer who went around asking questions about the hospital staff made her literary loose her breath. She had once felt life growing inside of her and knew what emotions that got stirred every time the baby moved, she'd experienced the strong bonds a mother and the unborn child develops. But she'd also paid the ultimate prize, she lost her baby.

As a woman she'd felt annoyed and enraged that Alan as a man would intrude in what by women was considered as holy. He'd stolen that very special bond mother and baby forms, for how could a man experience the same as a woman if he got pregnant? As she'd stolen a glance at Alan in the shower she knew he had proven her wrong and that all of her arguments were as poor as Alan had proven Deck's arguments for terminating his pregnancy. She felt like a thief, pawing at him in this moment of intimacy with his unborn daughter, but Camille didn't manage to look the other way. It was too beautiful...

After a few minutes Alan turned off the water and Camille immediately ducked away from the doorway. Cheeks blushing she tiptoed back to the entrance-door, opened it silently and then slammed it so that Alan would hear her "entering" the room.

"Alan? Dr. Norton told me to come and help you dry yourself off after the shower, is it all right?" she asked cautiously as she approached the half closed bathroom door.

"Sure, Camille! Come right in, I've already put on a towel on my... lower regions," Alan responded. Camille couldn't help her smile as she entered the room. Alan was as bashful as a virgin. So far none of the nurses had had easy access to his privates during his daily sponge baths. She stopped dead in the doorway though, once more struck by the magic she'd just witnessed.

"What?" Alan beamed as he made sure the towel wouldn't slide off his hips. And for the first time since she learned about Alan's pregnancy a true and honest smile dawned on the face of Camille Shutt.

*"Nothing's wrong, Alan, and that's the weird part of it! You look beautiful!" Alan's eyebrows rose in a mix of confusion and flattery.*

*"What?" He tilted his head to the side as he didn't believe his own ears. Camille nodded, smile remaining on her face as she repeated herself.*

*"You look absolutely radiant, Alan. I'd never believe I would think so, but I do."*

*"Yeah, I'm a real babe magnet, bloated and swollen," Alan laughed with rosy cheeks revealing his uneasiness. He was scared of having a fist launched at his face, he'd received compliments before that had blown up in his face as malicious pranks.*

*"I mean it, Alan. How odd it may be, you actually suit being pregnant. You have more mother's glow than I've seen on most expectant mothers!" she told him honestly as she grabbed a towel to help him dry off.*

*"Thank you, Camille; it means a lot to me!"*

*A few minutes later Alan was tucked back into bed, once more being weighed down by his ever-growing stomach, while Camille fluffed his pillows and worked like a mother hen to make him comfortable. He had been taken aback with this sudden change of appearance by Camille. She'd kept her distance and only visited him as a nurse, now she acted more like a caring friend and in Alan's current emotional state that normally would have been enough to have him bursting into tears. Thankfully he managed to control his urge to cry like a pathetic wreck, and settled with sending her thankful looks.*

*"So, how are you doing?" she suddenly asked, right out of the blue, as she sat down beside the bed for once without signs of great haste to get going to the next patient.*

*"I'm fine," Alan answered, lip curling: "I have to accept being treated like a punching bag around the clock, but that isn't more than I'm already used to," he added with a smirk. Camille, failing to read the irony, smiled as Alan's stomach shifted just to prove his point.*

*"I can see that," she chuckled and instinctively held out her hand towards the spot where Alan's daughter was kicking. But as soon as she realized what she was doing she retrieved her hand like she'd burned herself.*

*"I'm sorry, it's like a reflex!" she excused and her behaviour turned hasty again.*

*"It's all right, here," Alan reached out his hand towards hers. She hesitantly let him lead her hand back to his stomach and carefully plant it right above his navel. Camille was immediately rewarded with a forceful kick and she started giggling like a teenage girl.*

*"Wow, she \*is\* one hot-tempered little lady!!" she laughed as her palm became the centre of the unborn baby's attention.*

*"Yeah, you have no respect of your father what so ever, do you sweetie!" Alan murmured, not minding the pain added to his skin and internal organs the least one bit. Camille grinned as Alan's hand helped her to find an even more so active spot.*

*"She loves the attention, doesn't she?" she asked as her face lit up, noting a persistent shove. Alan nodded sweetly as he rubbed an aching side.*

*"Yes, I guess I've already spoiled her rotten," he confessed, shameful glee in his boyish face.*

*"You can't spoil a child on love, Alan," Camille told him sternly, her smile never leaving her eyes as she said it.*

*She couldn't believe it! Here she sat, squabbling with Alan as if it was the most natural thing in the world! Camille felt the life beneath her palm, and it dawned to her that it actually *\*felt\** natural. No matter Alan's sex, him being pregnant somehow made sense!*

*\*\_\**

*Gregory Deck was a busy man, obviously so busy that he didn't have the time to answer Alan's calls or to call him back. Alan had tried now for several weeks, and had been blown off with everything from business meetings, lunch appointments, and twice; the funeral of his mother. Alan might not be the lawyer of Chicago Hope anymore, but he still lived under the same moral standards as he did during his job. And for Alan it was important that Chicago Hope was under the best possible care also after he'd lost the job as General Counsellor. His bloodpressure that had started to stabilize some days after the attack was once more rising towards the sky, and Doctor Norton had now set the date for the C-section to next week, not willing to risk it any longer. Finally giving up reaching Deck, Alan turned to Philip and asked him for permission to have a look over of Deck's late work as Chicago Hope's lawyer. Philip hesitantly agreed after a consultation with Michael Norton who told him that Alan's blood pressure would continue to rise until he'd made sure Chicago Hope was under the best of care.*

*It was a fateful Saturday morning Alan was handed the briefcase containing all of Deck's stowed away files that he'd been working on during his stay at Chicago Hope. Alan found his peeking stomach to be one heck of a device to hold the papers for him, and he started going through the documents as thoroughly as he always did in matter of the hospital. Long hours were spent reading, conferring and comparing, making sure everything added up to the reports; that everything of importance was reported and so forth and so forth. He denied the nagging sensation in his back that wasn't too fond of sitting upright no more with such a heavy load to support. Deck seemed sloppy, but he got away with it, and at the end of the evening Alan hadn't found anything of real importance to point his finger at. That was until he found documents he himself had started, and it involved the follow-up maintenance check-ups he'd ordered on the elevators. Afraid the accident might happen again Alan had ordered check ups every fourteen days, and if there was as much as a tiny deviation in one of the elevators it would be shut down immediately for repairs. One life lost was one too many, and Alan would be damned if there should be more. Deck, seemingly wasn't of the same regard. He'd called off the inspections, due to cut down on hospital costs.*

*Somewhere inside Alan a spark ignited and he was filled with a fury and an outrage over this man who had decided a few bucks saved a month was more valuable than the possible saviour of human lives. He paid no concern to his bed curfew as he hobbled out of bed, documents stating Deck's crime towards humanity squeezed into his hand as he made sure his hospital coat covered his back and trudged out of the room, eyes burning with anger.*

*Alan had grown big and uncomfortable over the last months, but he paid no heat to the protests from his body as he stomped down the corridors, heading for Deck's office. Alan's fury was seldom raised, but when something really upset him to the height that he got angry, he could scare off the toughest lawyer with a stern glare. His hand strolled down to his side as he waddled down the hallways, telling nurses to mind their own business as they tried to stop him. Some sort of cramp was telling him to get back to bed, but Alan was in no mood to listen to nor nurses or cramps.*

*Just as he reached the wing where his old office was located at the very end a sharp pain located in the midst of Alan's abdomen made him stop up in surprise. He staggered on for a few steps, still with his goal in sight as a new bolt of pain made him waver and sent dark sparks of fear into his brain. Not able to stand up right any longer he sank to his knees with a moan, face contorting*

*in agony as the excruciating pain lingered on, making him yelp when his daughter started kicking to state her discomfort. Something was wrong, something was very wrong, and Alan had simply ignored it until he was unable to any longer!*

*\*\_\**

*Jeffrey Geiger had had a long and hard day at work. He'd lost one patient on the table and he'd also been through a seven hours heart transplant. All he wanted now was to go home and have some sleep. But first he would enjoy a nice glass of Cognac. But as he was about to put the glass to his lips he heard a weird noise outside his door, as if someone was slowly drifting down the side of it, not able to stand upright.*

*"Now what?!" he mumbled and set the glass down to go have a look. As he opened the door Jeffrey was met by a crouching figure in a polka dotted hospital coat.*

*"Alan!" he gasped when he recognised his face. The way Alan was crouching over his distended gut told Jeffrey that he was suffering from immense pain.*

*"Somebody get a stretcher, NOW!!!" Jeffrey bellowed, kneeling down beside the groaning man.*

*"It hurts, Jeffrey, it hurts so much!" Alan whimpered as Jeffrey eased his hands away from his stomach to have a better look.*

*"I know, Alan; I know," Jeffrey cooed and touched Alan's stomach with careful hands. He was awarded with a croaked cry, and Alan's forehead became wet within the matter of seconds.*

*"I was feeling just fine in one second, and then..." Alan couldn't suppress the moan grinding its way up his throat. Jeffrey had to bite his tongue knowing only too well what was the matter with the man. All signs indicated that he was suffering from severe haemorrhaging. He could bleed to death in matter of minutes.*

*"Where's that GOD DAMN stretcher?!" Jeffrey yelled as he tried to make Alan as comfortable as possible. He grabbed the nearest nurse, ordering her to set up for an emergency C-section in OR three.*

*"Get whoever's on call, and make it quick! We don't have much time!" he added in a lower tone. Jeffrey was afraid to upset Alan even more at this state. The faster his heart was beating, the faster it would pump blood into the cavity of Alan's stomach.*

*"Am I going to die?" Alan whimpered, staring at Jeffrey with terrified eyes. He was starting having problems with his breathing now. Jeffrey's biggest fear was that his diaphragm might burst due to the pressure, making his lungs collapse in the process.*

*"Your little baby girl is just in a hurry to get out and see the world! We'll wheel you down to the OR and have you and her fixed up in a jiffy!" Jeffrey promised. Alan closed his eyes and battled tears of anguish, his hands clasping his stomach in desperation.*

*Finally the stretcher came. It hadn't gone more than fifteen seconds since Jeffrey had found Alan lying on the floor, but that didn't stop him in yelling at the nurse that came running with it. Alan was rushed onto the stretcher on his back and was wheeled down the corridors towards the elevator in a menacing pace. Jeffrey was working on the clock here, and every second was counting. Down in floor five an OR was ready to start working on Alan as soon he was brought in, Dr. Norton would be the one performing the emergency C- section.*

*"Hang on, Alan; we're almost there!" Jeffrey said as he was wheeled inside the elevator. Alan nodded, looking scared out of his wits, but he kept quiet none the less. But as the doors closed*

behind them Alan's eyes rolled backwards and his entire body started to shake in violent spasms.

"He's spasming!" Jeffrey screamed: "Hold him down while I administer Diazepam!" Jeffrey screamed to the two nurses who had followed him inside the elevator. Alan had made sure all the elevators were equipped with emergency drugs and surgery kits in cases like this, quite the foreseeing one.. Jeffrey bit the tip of the syringe, and ripped open Alan's hospital coat to find a proper place to set the injection. Just as he was about to set the shot there was a bump, and then the elevator stopped.

"Are we down? Good!" Jeffrey said as he was administering the medicine that would stop Alan's spasms.

"Nurse Wiggum, you make sure there are at least five units of blood available when we get there, Alan's loosing a lot of blood!" He tossed the used syringe away and made ready to wheel Alan to the operation room. Then he discovered the strained look on the nurse closest to the door.

"For God's sake, open it woman! We don't have much time!" he screamed.

"We're trapped between the floors, Doctor," the nurse replied, defeat already building in her face.

"NO! This is NOT happening!" Jeffrey growled as he started hitting the elevator buttons in rare desperation.

"Come on, come on!!! WORK you piece of shit!" Jeffrey bellowed, kicking the steel door in desperate fury. On the stretcher Alan started moaning as he slowly drifted back to consciousness again. No. This wasn't fair! He'd already lost one patient this way, surely there didn't exist some rotten god up there that had the balls to do this against him twice?! Alan was squirming in pain, hand clutched to his chest, the two nurses looked like they were about to faint and Jeffrey was about to loose his mind. Alan was dying and here they were, trapped inside a steel box with no way out... Jeffrey tossed himself towards the elevator doors and started to pry it open. They were trapped between floors three and four, just their luck!

"Nurse Wiggum, run! Get help! We'll have to do the emergency C- section right here! He won't hold on much longer!" The red headed nurse obeyed and climbed down into floor three.

"Nurse Johnson, you'll assist me," Jeffrey said as he pored disinfectant over his hands.

"But shouldn't we wait for the re...." the nurse started.

"If we wait any longer he will DIE, nurse Johnson!" Jeffrey roared, forgetting the fact that Alan was perfectly able to hear him for the moment: "This is my call and my call alone! If you don't care to assist me then get the hell away from my OR! If not you inject the patient with the epidural!" Jeffrey barked. This was utter lunacy and he knew it. Even the cute little emergency pack Alan had put together didn't consist of proper equipment for a c-section. Alan should have been put under a general anaesthesia, but the cramped space of a freight elevator didn't tolerate such luxury as an anaesthesia machine, nor did it have a heart and lung machine or any other crucially important elements for this kind of procedure. Jeffrey knew the risk of Alan bleeding to death was too great if he hesitated any longer. He doubted the kid would even survive to be hauled out of the elevator in this state. The equipment would find its way to the elevator in a matter of minutes; in the meanwhile Jeffrey would have to make sure Alan's heart kept beating.

"We need several units of blood! And I need someone to assist me! I can't do this alone! Get Dr. Austin!!!" Jeffrey howled down the corridor of both floors three and four, now swarming with people.

"Jeffrey?" Alan's voice was tiny and afraid. He was coming back, and due to the lack of a proper anaesthesia machine he would stay conscious until one was wheeled as close to the elevator as possible.

"I can't feel anything... it's difficult to breathe," he whimpered, eyes so filled with fear Jeffrey felt like a butcher ready to chop up a newborn lamb.

"I gave you an epidural buddy, that's why you're not feeling anything, and that's why it feels hard to breathe. Don't worry, I'll take good care of you," Jeffrey assured both Alan and himself. God, what a nightmare! Jeffrey could only start to imagine how Alan was feeling, lying there helpless, bleeding rapidly to death.

"Try to relax; I'll open you up so that we can get starting on that little leakage of yours. Trust me, you're perfectly safe!" Jeffrey even managed to pull off a pretty convincing smile.

Moments later he was ready to make the first incision, being eyed by the remaining nurse, while two new nurses and an anaesthesia nurse climbed inside to assist. One of them carried a device which was used to extract blood from bleeding wounds.

"Just in time, my dear. You stand ready, I expect a lot of blood," Jeffrey said as his scalpel moved across Alan's skin to find the right spot to begin.

"And you," he addressed one of the other nurses: "stand ready with a clamp nine. If we're lucky it's just a ruptured artery!"

"Just?" the nurse garbled as she found her place, and was ready to assist.

"Yes, just! An artery is easily clamped. If the bleeding is caused by blood vessels surrounding the baby we have trouble in sight. I fear the placenta is attached to some of Alan's major organs!" Jeffrey firmly told his flock of nurses while his scalpel sunk down in strained flesh. Jeffrey had to close his eyes for a moment. Blood pored out of the gap he made like a tidal wave. Alan's body already was cramped up for space, and with all this blood pumping down into his abdomen the pain he would have suffered was horrible even to think of.

"Suction!" he ordered: "And you, administer a blood transfusion immediately!!" he snapped to the nurse who was currently unoccupied. Then he turned towards the hallways again.

"I need an assistant doctor NOW! I have a baby girl here who needs some attention!"

"Relax, I'm coming!" an irritable voice called as a head appeared above the Elevator entrance.

"Kate Austin, I'm pleased you found time to join us after all!" Jeffrey barked, already working deep inside Alan to locate the source of his bleeding.

"Don't you worry, Alan, I'll take good care of your little girl!" Kate assured the wide-eyed man, before she turned and screamed for someone to bring along the bloody anaesthesia machine.

"He's bleeding pretty bad, how much has he lost?" she mumbled as she put her head towards Jeffrey, making sure Alan wouldn't hear her.

"Two pints at least, Austin," Jeffrey answered: "Come on, more suction! I can't see a thing!!!"

\*\_\*

Alan was in a world of his own, hearing Jeffrey swear and bark orders in the distance. He couldn't move, he didn't even feel pain any more, and that somehow scared him more than

anything. Jeffrey could assure him everything was fine all he wanted, but when a Doctor had to operate in an elevator nothing was fine, and that was final. What biting irony if he, Alan Birch, died here in the same elevator as the patient Jeffrey had lost, after all of Alan's hard work to make sure it would never happen again... It was terrifying not feeling anything, terrifying to know that he was fighting for his life, without any chance to jump off the merry-go-round if he wanted off. His life was in the hands of Geiger, his daughter's life rested solely in the hands of Austin. None of them educated as obstetricians, but as heart surgeons...

"Alan, we're removing the baby now! When she's out I'll start removing the placenta!" he could hear Jeffrey state in a clear and stern voice. Alan tried to answer but garble was the only thing coming out of his mouth. He was starting to feel strangely light-headed, as if a breeze was floating upwards and into his brain.

\*\_\*

"His heart rate just dropped!" the anaesthetics nurse reported with alarm in her voice. Jeffrey snarled in response, working even faster. Kate had trouble keeping up with his pace.

"One stumble and it's game over Jeffrey," she mumbled as the baby's head emerged to the surface, helped by Jeffrey's hands.

"Just shut up and keep him open!" Jeffrey mumbled in response. Moments later the baby was fully emerged and handed over to one of the nurses.

"Check her vitals, nurse!" he ordered as he immediately got back to work with the placenta. It was as he had feared.. The placenta had attached to several major organs, including Alan's liver, which had caused the bleeding to start when the fluid sack surrounding the baby and the placenta ruptured. To stop the bleeding completely heavy surgery and probably partly removal of Alan's liver was needed. All Jeffrey could do under these circumstances was to patch Alan up temporarily so that he would make it down to the OR.

"She's not breathing Doctor!" the nurse who was tending the baby called out in frustration. Jeffrey gave Kate one look and another nurse took over Kate's assisting, while Kate was attending the newborn.

"Why... why isn't.. she screaming...." Alan mumbled, tossing his head weakly from side to side. Tears were streaming down his cheeks.

"She'll be fine, Alan! Kate's just helping her to breathe," Jeffrey assured while he worked in a frenzy.

"How much blood so far?" he asked the nurse administering the blood.

"Three units, Doctor," she answered.

"Alright, you hang on now Alan! Just a few more stitches and we'll get you down to floor five!" Jeffrey demanded as he continued his work.

"How's his heart rate?!"

"It's climbing back, it's looking good Doctor!" the nurse assured. Jeffrey drew a silent sigh of release. All he needed now was a scream from the newborn infant.

"I'm.. feeling.. strange...." Alan croaked, drawing his breath in a shivering gasp. There was one huge rattle in his chest, then all hell broke loose.



*"He just flat lined!" the anaesthetics nurse screamed as the intolerable beep of a none beating heart appeared on the tiny heart monitor she'd brought along.*

*"No! Don't you chicken out on me now, Eel!!!" Jeffrey demanded in desperation as a nurse immediately started massaging his chest.*

*"Bring the paddles up here!" Jeffrey was so caught up in his work that he didn't even notice his own tears as they started streaming down his cheeks. He wasn't loosing Alan, he wasn't he wasn't! He shoved the nurse away and started CPR himself. In the mean while paddles were brought up a ladder and charged. Kate left the lifeless baby to one of the nurses while she was assisting with giving Alan's heart a jumpstart.*

*"Charging!" she yelled, and waited for the beep that indicated that the paddles were fully charged: "Clear!" Jeffrey moved away so that she could administer the paddles to Alan's chest. His back arched for a moment while electricity charged through his body, but Alan fell down just as lifeless. Jeffrey went back to massaging while Kate recharged the paddles.*

*"Clear!" she shouted, and once more electricity tried to convince Alan's heart to start beating again. And once more, no response.*

*"No, Alan; you little weasel! I'm not letting you slip away like this you bastard! You'll be a man and take the consequences of your choices! There's a little baby girl that's depending on you!" he growled, not minding the fact that the baby girl was as lifeless as Alan.*

*"How's the baby?," Kate asked as she recharged the paddles for the third time. She was starting to give up hope. Alan had slipped away between their fingers. The only reason she continued charging the paddles was for the look of steel in Jeffrey's eyes.*

*"Still no heartbeat, Doctor," the reply came flatly: "Should I call the time?"*

*"NO!" Jeffrey snapped: "You'll continue giving the baby CPR, nurse! She was in distress when we got her out, but she's fine! She just needs some time!"*

*"Jeffrey..." Kate started, but she quietened quickly when she received a determined glare.*

*"Clear," she shouted. For the third time Alan's torso spasmed, and for the third time nothing more happened.*

*"One more time!" Jeffrey ordered, frantically massaging Alan's chest.*

*"Jeffrey.." Kate started once more.*

*"ONE MORE TIME ALRIGHT?!!" Jeffrey shouted, madness dawning in his eyes as he was about to loose his second patient for the day. Then, in the midst of all the darkness there came a happy cry from the nurse working on the baby.*

*"She's breathing doctor!" she yelled just as a confirmative wail sounded like music to everybody's ears in the cramped room.*

*"Did you hear that, Alan?!" Jeffrey barked: "She made it! Now YOU make it!! Don't you dare leave her like this!!!"*

*"Clear!" Kate brought forth the paddles for the fourth and last time. Jeffrey stepped back, while willing the man on the bloodstained stretcher to live.*

*For the last time Alan's back arched and fell down, seemingly as lifeless as before. Kate had*

already resigned, Jeffrey could tell by her eyes.

"Doctor, I have a heart beat!" the anaesthesia nurse screamed as the wonderful sound of Alan's returning heartbeat ticked out in the room.

The people in the corridors broke out in cheers and applauds, even Jeffrey had to smile although he knew Alan had a far way to go before he was to be considered as the least bit stable.

"Alright! Let's get this puppy brought down to OR three before he changes his mind!" he urged. The legs on Alan's stretcher was folded so that he and the stretcher could slip through the crack between floor three and four, and there from he was wheeled to the nearest elevator with the promise that no God was so cruel as stop an elevator twice in the same day.

Jeffrey sank down to the elevator floor, too exhausted to move any further.

"Aren't you coming?" Kate asked as she eased herself over the edge of the elevator.

"I ordered this elevator to take me down to second, and so it will!" Jeffrey simply said. He had no strength to go anywhere right now, and this elevator was just as good a place to rest as any.

\*\_\*

Philip arrived the hospital twenty minutes after he'd received the message about Alan's collapse, and joined other nervous spectators in the observation room, overlooking OR three.

"How is he?" he asked as he nudged his way to the front line where Kate Austin was standing.

"For a man surviving an emergency C-section in an elevator... pretty good," Kate stated with raised shoulders. Philip bit his knuckles as he looked down in the OR where the Doctors were trying their best to patch Alan up.

"I told him to stay in bed!" Philip wheezed: "What the hell was he doing out of bed?!"

"I believe this has something to do with it," Kate answered and handed him a bloodstained sheet of paper.

"Jeffrey told me that Alan was holding it when he found him, and he didn't let go of it until his heart stopped." Philip snatched the paper from Kate's hand. After a few moments of reading he looked back down in the OR where Alan's lifeless body was going through major surgery.

"Where's Deck?!" he growled: "That son of a bitch, I'll kill him!!!" And with those words he stormed out of the room, like a deadly hurricane.

Deck was preparing to leave for the day. He was just packing his briefcase when Philip stormed into his office.

"Dr. Watters, what can I do for you?" he asked smoothly as he snapped the briefcase shut.

"Would you be so kind as to explain *this*?!" Philip barked and slapped the paper on his desk. Deck picked it up and gave it a bored glance.

"The elevator has proved to work perfectly every single examination since the regrettable... incident. I didn't see it necessary to waste more of the hospital's money on useless check ups of freight elevators that's had one incident!" he answered smugly, almost as if he could see his own tanned reflection when he spoke.

*"The "one" incident just doubled into \*two\* incidents!!!!" Philip barked: "If that elevator had been thoroughly maintenance-checked every fourteen days as Alan originally scheduled, the second \*incident\* might have been avoided!!!"*

*"Yes, it \*might\*!" Deck stated: "What's important here is to minimise the consequences for the hospital! I'll get right on the case, suing the elevator company, and make sure the patient's family don't sue us!" Philip was grateful there was a desk separating him from the other man. If not he would have given him a swollen upper lip.*

*"Where have you \*been\* the last hour or so? Haven't you even heard about this until now?"*

*"I told my secretary I wasn't to be disturbed under any circumstance!" Deck answered cheekily: "That Birch-caricature has been nagging me for weeks now to get in touch with him. The silly little twit hasn't realized he's without a job yet and still thinks he runs this hospital!" he chuckled.*

*"Alan never believed he ran this hospital," Philip snarled: "and I've weirdly enough been under the illusion I was the one running it. But in Alan's absence I've realized it was him all along. And you're wrong to, because Alan \*was\* running the hospital, and when he recovers he \*will\* run the hospital again! So this is your fourteen days' notice, Mr. Deck; you're fired! Oh, and one more thing..." Philip turned as he was heading for the door: "I never liked you Mr. Deck, you're too slick!"*

*He hurried back to the observation room where Jeffrey just had joined the other doctors, nagging about the elevator still not working.*

*"Any progress?" Philip asked as he once more elbowed his way to the front line.*

*"He's hanging by a thread, but knowing Alan I would bet it is a pretty strong one," Kate answered.*

*"And what about the baby? Did he loose it?"*

*Kate ran her hand through her short ,curly hair.*

*"He had a perfect baby girl, 5.3 pounds. She wasn't breathing when we brought her out but we resuscitated her. She's brought down to intensive care, so far she's doing well."*

*Philip nodded with a sigh. If there was any justice it would have been Deck with his moneysaving knife who was lying stretched out on the operation table, not Alan.*

*\*\_\**

*The Doctors spent nine hours patching Alan up. His abdomen was a mess after the eight months of intruding by a growing foetus, and parts of his liver had to be removed to stop him from bleeding to death. All of Alan's invisible friends silently watched as he was coached urgently back to life after a couple of flat liners, and none of them dared to breathe when he finally was wheeled out of the OR. He was as fragile as the skinniest cup of china, no one knew if he would survive the following and crucial day.*

*Philip followed as Alan was wheeled into the ICU, and he stayed by his friend's side like a loyal dog, waiting for its master to awake. Pretty funny, given the thought it should have been the other way around. Alan was the loyal dog, and Philip was his master. That was how it had been forever, but maybe things were about to change?*

*\*\_\**

*While Philip sat by Alan's side, Camille and Aaron paid his new-born daughter a visit. Aaron*

wasn't too fond of the idea, though. He couldn't quite get used to the fact that this baby originated from Alan's stomach. He stood in the corner of the room, sulking, while Camille walked over to the incubator where the baby girl laid.

"Oh, she is gorgeous!" she gasped as she peeked through the glass: "Aaron, come and see!"

"I.. uhm... think I'll just wait here," Aaron answered uneasily and looked at his wristwatch.

"Don't be silly, Aaron! Come see her!" Camille ordered in the certain soft tone only women are able to pull off. Aaron sighed and walked over. He wasn't sure of what he was about to see. His skills and knowledge as a Doctor didn't chase away the phantom image of a freak child with three arms and a grotesque face. A child bore forth by a man; it was unnatural and unheard of. But the image of the Frankenstein baby vanished as his gaze met two blue eyes staring back at him from the incubator. Aaron found nothing wrong with it, no matter how hard he tried. Alan's daughter looked as blessedly normal and beautiful as any new-born baby.

"Should she be left alone like this when she is awake?" he snapped, as latent fatherly instincts kicked in no matter how hard he tried to shove them away.

"Don't worry, Aaron. They take good care of her!" Camille smiled and patted his back, dreaming about babies of her own.

\*\_\*

Five days went by without Alan waking up. Philip started fearing he never might.. His daughter on the other hand was doing fine as a peach and didn't need the incubator anymore. Jeffrey stuck his head in to see how Alan was doing late one afternoon, while Philip was drowsing off by the side of Alan's bed.

"Any improvement?" he asked and entered the room. Philip jerked back to the real world with a snort.

"Jeffrey! I didn't hear you come in," he mumbled and straightened his back: "No, he's the same. He just lays there, all peaceful like he was sleeping." Jeffrey grabbed the chart by the bed and had a look at it.

"He should have woken by now," he mumbled silently as his eyes wandered over the limp body sprawled in the hospital bed. Philip nodded with a sigh.

"I know... But I can't give up hope, not after all he's been through! There would be no justice in this world if he shouldn't recover! I talk to him every day, but there's no response what so ever.. Maybe it's time to accept defeat..." Jeffrey walked over and lay a warm hand upon his shoulder.

"Alan isn't a quitter, Philip. He's fighting, I know it!" An idea formed in his mind and Jeffrey left the room in a hurry.

"There's one thing we haven't tried yet!" he told Philip leaving the room: "If this doesn't wake Alan, nothing will!"

He charged down the hallways, an excited look on his face. He'd seen this work before, therefore it had to work now, it had to! In the nursery he found what he was looking for, a crib labelled "Birch".

"I'm borrowing this little beauty for a few minutes!" he told the nurse in charge and carefully picked up a baby girl tucked into a pink blanket. He left as swiftly as he had come and strolled back down the halls again with a smile building on his face.

*"You're going to meet your daddy, pumpkin!" he murmured to the baby eyeing him from where she was cradled in his arms. Memories of his own son flashed by his brain and he didn't care anymore how this baby had been created. She was even more of a miracle than usual!*

*Philip got to his feet in an instant as Jeffrey entered the room.*

*"Jeffrey, what are you doing?!" he whispered: "You shouldn't bring \*her\* in here!"*

*"Of course I should, he's her daddy!" Jeffrey answered and approached her bed.*

*"Alan, wake up and see who I've brought to meet you!" he told the man in the bed. He sat down on the bedside, hoping the gurgling sounds Alan's daughter were making would be powerful enough to raise Alan from his coma. Philip paced back and forth, looking uneasy.*

*"I would have preferred if you'd asked me first!" he mumbled, not taking his eyes from Alan who's heaving chest was the only visible sign he was still alive.*

*"You would have said no," Jeffrey answered and raised his shoulders: "And you wanted to see your father, didn't you?" he cooed at the yawning baby girl squirming in his arms.*

*"What do you say, wanna meet him? Wanna meet him right now, you say?" Jeffrey asked the baby and smiled as another yawn was reported back at him.*

*"Alright honey, here we go," he said and gently put her down on the top of Alan's chest. Philip made some protesting sounds but didn't interfere as father and daughter met for the first time on the outside.*

*"Can you feel that, Alan?" Jeffrey urged: "That's her, that's your babygirl! All you have to do is to open your eyes and you will see the most beautiful baby that's ever been born on this hospital!"*

*\*\_\**

*He was in a faraway place, where everything was blessedly peaceful. After eight months of never-ending stress Alan was glad to breathe freely and to relax. In this place he didn't have to fight for acceptance, he wasn't frozen out, he was his own master. The pain shrunk here, and he didn't feel the need to return back to the world of disappointments ever again. Why should he? He wouldn't be missed, he had no family and his baby-girl had died within him. If he returned he would die of grief and the agony would rip him apart. It was better this way.*

*And in this state of apathy he lingered on, waiting to draw his last breath and hopefully be rejoined with his daughter somewhere on the other side. His chest got heavy and he reckoned his time had finally come, but he wasn't filled with fear. He wanted this. Earth wasn't his home anymore.*

*"Can you feel that, Alan?" A distant voice caught his attention while Alan's soul prepared to make the plunge. Of course he felt it. His chest was so heavy he wouldn't be able to breathe for much longer! But... there was something else... the feeling of something moving.. the feeling of something warm against his skin..*

*"That's her, that's your baby-girl!" It was like getting smacked in the face. Alan felt a rush of panic rush through his veins. Why couldn't he see her, why couldn't he touch her!?!*

*"All you have to do is to open your eyes and you will see the most beautiful baby that's ever been born on this hospital!"*

*A mental cry was all Alan managed to respond with. His daughter was so close, so close, and he couldn't reach her! Would he die like this, banned both in heaven \*and\* in hell?? He reached out, reached out towards the warmth of his own flesh and blood, fearing she would disappear any second.*

*he told himself in anguish. It was hopeless.. He was trapped here in this world between worlds and couldn't even die if he wanted to. As he lay there in despair, slowly giving up- invisible fingers touched his lips. It was a simple touch but it was a touch that sent shockwaves through Alan's battered body, raising it back to life.*

*"His eyelids, look at his eyelids!" the distant voice yelled out.*

*"Pick up the baby, he's choking!" another distant voice barked.*

*\*\_\**

*Both Doctors had to look at each other to make sure they weren't dreaming. Alan's eyelids were fluttering! The baby had touched his lips with an outstretched arm, and now it seemed like Alan was actually responding.*

*"Come on, Jeffrey, pick her up!" Philip repeated. Alan's body was so fragile even the weight of a baby might choke him. And then the miracle no one had dared hope for happened, Alan's lips moved slightly and he spoke.*

*"No." It was only one word, but the two letters sounded like music in Philip's ears. And shortly after two slits opened in Alan's eyes and he drew a big, though shaky inhale of breath. Confusion lit his weary face as he slowly looked around to confirm where he was. He was searching for something or someone... His eyes darted downwards to his chest, and there was a sound of relief, so great that Philip feared Alan's lungs was starting to fail on him again.*

*"Welcome back, buddy!" Jeffrey said with a smile so huge his eyes disappeared. But Alan didn't seem to notice Jeffrey. He only had eyes for the little lady placed on top of his chest. Watery eyes told everything about his state of euphoria as he silently watched the blessing he was sure he had lost.*

*"Sweet.. ie," he croaked, looking so incredibly happy and emotional that even Philip had to brush away a tear. Jeffrey picked her up so that Alan would be able to see her face. Alan's pale face was embraced with a warm smile as he made eye contact with his daughter for the very first time. Exhausted by this first encounter he fell asleep again, but the smile stayed on his face. True bliss.*

*\*\_\**

*A couple of hours later Alan woke up again, and this time all of the ones he saw as his friends stood by the side of his bed. In his weary state of mind and body Alan was sure he was dreaming, but it was a wonderful dream none the less. Philip stood closest and in his arms he held Alan's treasure, his baby-girl.*

*"Hi everybody!" he tried to say, but the words came out muffled and inaudible due to the days he'd spent in a coma.*

*"Rest your voice, Alan!" Philip urged, but the huge grin on his face told Alan not to take his boss too seriously.*

*"We've all been worried for you, Alan!" Camille said and patted his hand as she walked up to his side. Alan didn't have the strength to squeeze her hand as he had intended to. Instead he*

answered with a weak nod. His eyes darted amongst everybody standing opposite him, and his gaze thanked every single one of them. Then his gaze stopped by the squirming blanket in Philip's arms.

"Can I... can I hold her?" he asked, his voice slowly coming back to life for every word he spoke. Philip had a doubting look in his face.

"Sure he can!" Aaron answered and rushed to Alan's side to help him sit up.

"All of his stitches are healing fine and the sooner he starts rehabilitation the better!!!" Aaron told Philip. Pillows were stuffed behind him to support Alan's back, and with new-found strength he lifted his arms to greet his baby daughter.

"Hi sweetie!" he cooed as the tiny body rested in his arms for the first time. "You're a lot smaller than I thought you'd be, but that doesn't matter! The longer you take to grow up the better!" A childlike smile appeared on his face as he could inhale her scent and watch her without fog misting up his eyes.

"Oh, Alan she is adorable!" Camille sighed and brushed a slender hand over the top of the baby's head. Alan looked up at her with tears of joy streaming down his face.

"Even though this is just a dream, I still feel more happy than I've ever been in my entire life. This is the best dream I've ever had!"

"Then it would please you even more to learn that you're *\*not\** dreaming!" Jeffrey told him and placed a kiss on his fingertip and planted it on top of the baby's forehead. A confused smile lit up Alan's face.

"I'm not dreaming? Then why are all of you..."

"We're here for you, Alan," Jeffrey answered and tilted his head as the baby yawned. "And for this little princess of course!"

"Have you thought of a name for her?" Camille asked.

Alan looked down on his daughter, the miracle that had inevitably changed his life forever. Big blue eyes gazed back at him and a small hand clasped around his finger as if she was signalling him to never let her go. Life would be tough on her, Alan knew that. She was carried forth by a man, and would be considered a freak by many. And he? He would stay on at Chicago Hope, fending off lawsuits, and his friends would forget him all over again. He would be stepped on and yelled at, and he would continue defending them with the same passion. Nothing changes over night, or almost nothing. For this little baby girl had restored in Alan what he thought he'd lost. And with pride in his eyes he announced his daughter's name, heart trembling with both worries and delight of what the future would bring.

"Hope," he simply said: "I'm naming her Hope!"

~end~

[Back to index](#)

All publicly recognizable characters and settings are the property of their respective owners. The original characters and plot are the property of the author. No money is being made from this work. No copyright infringement is intended.

This story archived at <http://www.squidge.org/mufa-mpreg/viewstory.php?sid=219>