

Goldenviron The First Encounter

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This novel is entirely a work of fiction. The names, localities and incidents revealed within its covers are a result of the author's imagination

I began the writing of this novel when my father was still alive. Since he was my hero, my idol, I now dedicate its completion to his memory.

Acknowledgments

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One

SABRINA'S eyes fluttered open, but she immediately closed the lids against the glare and a searing pain that roared through her head like a blazing inferno. *What was that... she wondered... and where am I?* The brief glimpse she'd had of her surroundings gave no clue of her whereabouts; just dazzling light. She thought her aching head must be resting on pillows, or was it swaddled in something? She felt certain her body lay on a bed, but almost in a sitting position, her legs outstretched.

Instinctively, she tried to raise her left hand to touch her head, but it felt weighted down; there seemed to be a tonne of lead preventing its movement. Relief flooded through her when she was able to wriggle her fingers, even if she couldn't lift the hand from her side.

She carefully raised her lids open again, her eyes just slits, and peered through the long lashes. After a while the irises adjusted to the brightness and she slowly moved them from left to right, surveying her environment. Noting the

tubular metal end of the bed and the food trolley just beyond it, she guessed she must be in a hospital.

Sabrina's head *was* propped up by pillows and the bed *was* raised at the top end providing support for her shoulders. The side rails were pulled up like a child's cot, preventing her from falling out.

Bandages surrounded her head and the visible parts of her face were badly battered; she looked as if she had recently completed ten rounds in the ring with Mike Tyson. The scrapes and scratches had been dabbed with Gentian Violet which blended well with the multiple bruises.

White provides a sterile-looking environment and is generally accepted therefore in hospitals around the globe, but this private ward was impossibly so. Everything in the room was painted white and remarkably there were no varying degrees. Where white is defined in the dictionary as simply white, a white fabric held against a white wall will provide a subtle difference in shade. Here, however, everything was perfectly matched as if after curtaining and furnishing the room, the entire area had been dusted with a spray gun; the result was astounding. The fluorescent tube in the centre of the ceiling, which provided the only source of light, accentuated the brilliance; not one scrap of colour was present anywhere.

The room was silent; and no sounds emanated from the corridors beyond the closed door, not even hushed whispers from passing nurses, or the padding of soft footsteps. It appeared to Sabrina that she was the only inhabitant within the entire complex.

As her consciousness gradually improved she glanced, without moving her head, toward what she assumed were the windows; curtains were drawn tightly shut providing no view beyond them. Then she heard a gentle click from the opposite side of the room; a door closing perhaps? But she had been alone, hadn't she? Had somebody just retreated from the room in which she lay? *Am I actually awake or is this just a really bad dream*, she asked herself.

Her body ached so much she knew it would be impossible to move from the confines of her bed and explore her location. She had already guessed from her sanitary surroundings that she must be in a hospital or similar

institution, but could not recall what events had brought her here.

Lying perfectly still, her eyes closed again, she allowed her wakefulness to return at its' own pace. She wondered where her beloved husband was, why he wasn't here. Had she been involved in an accident; and if so had Hilton been with her? Was he too injured, or worse still, taken from her for all eternity? That idea didn't bear thinking about... What was her last conscious memory?

She had visited the local hospital on numerous occasions, but never recalled wards with such conspicuous contents; so where was she? She cautiously opened her eyes again and glanced around the room. It was absurd. Every item of furniture, the entire room and its contents were painted the same pristine white.

She tried to turn her head, rather than just her eyes, toward the windows again, but found she was restricted with a neck brace; that attempt hurt like hell. Instead she twisted her body which brought intense stabs of pain to her shoulder, but she persevered.

She could now see the bedside table on top of which stood a plastic beaker and an opaque jug. She presumed the carafe must contain water and imagining its contents instantly made her thirsty, but her arms still felt weighed down. A sense of helplessness engulfed her.

Her mouth was drying rapidly; she continued staring at the water jug longingly, wondering how she might get to it. She tried lifting her right hand, but that movement resulted in piercing pain. Rotating her body agonisingly in that direction she saw a stand with a drip attached to it and realised the source of the stinging sensation. Even the drip bag, tube and stand were white and she marvelled at this since she knew the plastic should be clear to allow visuals of the fluid flowing through.

She wriggled the toes on her right foot, but was rewarded with excruciating agony when attempting the same thing with her left. She reasoned there must be an injury about which she would no doubt learn in due course.

Sabrina closed her eyes again and tried to relax. Gradually, faded memories began creeping forward until eventually she was able to recollect some of the events leading up to her current circumstances.

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