

# THE MAN WITH NO PAST

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Doctor Don Allen squinted as he studied the young man sitting on the examination table. The man, in his twenties, looked healthy and was, obviously, not in pain.

"I'm Doctor Allen." Don did not recognize the man as one of his patients, couldn't even place him, but the man had asked for him by name. "Have we met before?"

"I don't know, but you're the one," the man said, without emotion.

"What's the problem," Don looked at the clipboard to see the name, "Mr. Garcia?"

"Appendicitis."

"Are you in pain?"

"No." Hector Garcia cast his eyes toward the ceiling. "The pain won't start until three oh seven."

"How do you know it is appendicitis?"

"Well," The man shrugged his shoulders and gestured with open hands indicating that it was obvious. "you will tell me."

"I will tell you?" Don took a step forward. The man seemed pleasant and alert and didn't seem to be high on anything. Don looked at his watch. It was almost

midnight. "Well, Mr. Garcia, you may be able to look into a crystal ball and see what I will tell you in a few hours, but I can't start treatment until it happens," Don explained calmly. "I suggest you go home and come back when the pain starts."

"I can't," Hector Garcia said quickly, earnestly. "I won't make it in time. You won't be here and there will be complications."

For a moment, Don considered calling security and have the man thrown out as a crackpot, but he changed his mind. The man wasn't threatening and there was a sincere urgency in his pleading. "Why don't you go to the lounge and wait there?"

"You will be here?"

"Yes, I or another doctor will be here."

"No, I mean you. Will you be here?"

"Yes, I'll be here." Don lied. His shift ended at two, but Hector seemed to be agitated and needed to be assured. Maybe he wasn't lying. He was often delayed.

"Doctor Allen," the nurse caught Don just as he was leaving the hospital, "your patient is in pain and is vomiting."

"My patient?"

"Yes, Mr. Garcia. He is in pain and vomiting."

Don remembered and immediately looked at his watch. "He's an hour early."

"Beg your pardon?"

"I'll be right there."

It was, indeed, appendicitis. After attending to Hector and sending him to be prepared for surgery, Don remained in the examination room for a few minutes. Though he had been off by exactly an hour, Don was impressed. How did he know? Why did he ask for him specifically? Now, he had to know more about this pleasant, mysterious Mr. Garcia. Don turned around to leave and noticed that the wall clock was off by an hour. It had not been reset for standard time. Don was now really impressed.

Hector Garcia was recovering nicely and sleeping when Don Allen made his rounds the following morning. Don resisted the temptation to wake him feeling that the patient needed rest more than he needed to satisfy his curiosity. It was not until the following day that Doctor Allen found Hector awake and alert. "How are you feeling, Mr. Garcia?"

"Fine." Hector squinted and stared blankly at Don as if he didn't recognize him.

"Do you know who I am?" Don moved from the foot to the side of the bed.

"No," Hector said, shaking his head.

"Can you grasp my hand?" His grasp was firm. "Do you know where you are?"

"Hospital," Hector said.

"Yes, what hospital?" "I don't know."

"Do you know why you are here?"

"No." It was puzzling. The patient looked alert and didn't seem disoriented, his grasp was firm, yet he didn't know where he was or why he was here. Something was wrong. "It's okay, doctor. I consent."

What's okay?"

"You want to give me an EEG and I consent."

"I don't know how you do this, but yes, I want to give you an EEG."

Don stood next to Doctor Perez, the senior neurologist at the hospital and somewhat of a mentor, as he quickly scanned the EEG chart. "Well," Doctor Perez said, looking at Don and adjusting his glasses, "it looks perfectly normal if the patient is being tortured! You better have the calibration of the instrument checked."

"I already did. In fact, I had a second EEG done with a different instrument and we got exactly the same results."

"Hmmm." Doctor Perez adjusted his glasses and analyzed the chart more closely.

"Hmmm," he said again.

"Well, what do you think?"

"I don't know. Everything is normal -- just amplified. Here," Doctor Perez pointed to the chart, "where the strobe is used there is an increase in brain activity, as it should be, but the whole thing is off scale."

"Is there anything there that could explain loss of memory?"

"No, the brain is working fine. It may be over-working. He's hyper."

"Now," Don could hardly contain his excitement, "I believe the patient is psychic. Could that have anything to do with it?"

"That's not my specialty," Doctor Perez said, folding the chart neatly. "I deal with real, physical things -- not spooks! And I suggest," he added, handing the chart to Don, "that you do the same." When the senior man opened the door to leave, he turned to Don. "You're not going to leave it, are you?" Don shook his head. "The problem may not be physical. Consult Doctor Joki. She may be able to help you in that area."

"Who's Doctor Joki?"

"She's a psychiatrist, more closely associated with the university than with us. She likes spooky stuff. I'll prepare the ground and tell her to expect your call."

"Hello Doctor Allen," Hector said, seriously, as Don entered the room.

"Well, you recognize me today. That's an improvement." Don wondered if he had jumped the gun. "How are you feeling today."

"I'm sore. I have this cut here." Hector pointed to the incision.

"Do you know why you're here?"

"No."

"Doctor," the nurse stuck her head into the room, "you have a phone call at the station." Don immediately looked at his beeper. He had turned it off. He turned it back on and left the room. A few minutes later he returned to the room and at once noticed a blank expression on Hector's face.

"Do you know who I am?"

"Yes. You're my doctor."

"Do you know my name?"

"No."

"Mr. Garcia are you playing games with me? Less than five minutes ago you said my name!" Don had become a bit impatient. "Mr. Garcia we do not have time for games."

"How can I know your name? No one will tell me."

Don wasn't sure if he should cancel the meeting with Doctor Joki or not. Was he dealing with an idiot? Yet there was something compelling about Mr. Garcia. He should just shrug his shoulders and leave it, but he sensed that something was terribly wrong. "At what time is Doctor Joki coming?" Hector asked.

"You tell me."

"I can't. I don't have a watch."

"She's on her way here now," he said, softly. Don was perplexed. The statements Mr. Garcia made were non sequitur, but he didn't appear to be a simpleton. In fact, now that he thought about it, none of the statements Mr. Garcia had made were quite right. How did he know about Doctor Joki? Does he read minds also?

"Hello, Doctor Joki," Hector said as the matronly psychiatrist entered the room and walked past Don without even acknowledging him. "I'm not impressed. I've seen better. A lot of people know my name!"

Don was surprised and embarrassed by Doctor Joki's brusqueness. Hector remained calm. "Can you tell me my future?"

Doctor Judith Joki pressed.

"No." Hector slowly shook his head. "I suppose you need something to get the 'vibes'." Judy Joki took off a ring from her finger and handed it to Hector. "Now go into a trance and tell me my future." Hector held the ring on his open hand and simply looked at it. "Well, go ahead. Do your stuff. Tell me what I'll be doing next week."

"I don't know," Hector said softly and looked at Don.

"Doctor Joki, could I talk to you outside for a minute?" Don asked.

"How about tomorrow?" Doctor Joki completely ignored Doctor Allen. Hector shook his head. "In one hour?"

"I don't have a watch, but soon you'll be asking me to go to your clinic for an evaluation."

"Fat chance, but you're clever -- very clever."

"Doctor Joki, I need to talk to you outside," Don said firmly and started to walk out of the room.

"If he's truly psychic, that would be a waste of time," Doctor Joki said, but still followed Doctor Allen into the hall.

"Doctor Joki, I'll not have you badgering my patient that way. In the first place, Mr. Garcia has never claimed to be psychic. I'm the one who said that he may be psychic, besides, he has a much more serious problem -- amnesia. If you're not interested in this case, I'll get someone else."

"You'll get someone else? How about the patient?"

"The only reason you're on this case is because Doctor Perez recommended you."

"The only reason I'm here is because Doctor Perez called me and told me to listen to you. Did he tell you about my research?"

"He said you liked 'spooky' stuff."

"That's right -- psychic phenomena. And you know what I've found out?" Don shook his head. "There are two kinds of psychics, those who claim psychic powers for attention and those who claim it for money. And both kind need therapy, especially the former! My research has been hampered by charlatans, frauds and deluded psychotics. I'm running out of time!" Judy Joki took a deep breath and for a moment they simply stared at each. "Look, Doctor Allen," she continued, more calmly, "I may have come on a little too strong, but I'm just weeding out the phonies." After a moment's pause, Doctor Joki continued, "What do you know about him?"

"Just what I told you over the phone. He seems to be able to see the future very accurately, but he also seems to be suffering from amnesia. Today, he remembered my name and five minutes later, he forgot it. Actually, I shouldn't say 'forgot it,' it was more like he never knew it."

"Sounds like it might be a physical problem."

"We can't find anything, besides he's not disoriented. He just forgets. Could it be some kind of trauma in his past."

"Maybe, but it doesn't make sense. Trauma can cause amnesia for a set episode, not a 'running amnesia.' Have you considered that he may simply be dumb."

"The thought has occurred to me, but that doesn't add up either."

"He must be faking. It just doesn't make sense."

"If he is, it's a good fake."

"On the contrary, Doctor Allen, it's a poor fake and that's why I'm interested. Frauds do better research. I guess he was right. I am going to ask him to go to the clinic for evaluation."

"IQ of ten? That's impossible!" Doctor Joki grabbed the paper out of the graduate student's hand and scanned it. "What is Mr. Garcia trying to pull?" she asked, more to herself than to her assistant.

"Maybe he can't read."

Doctor Joki sat back on her chair and bit the tip of her glasses. "Well, give him the full battery of tests. Also, find out more about him. Interview his employer, his teachers, friends, relatives, etcetera. I want to build a complete psychological profile on Mr. Garcia!"

During the following week, Hector Garcia was subjected to extensive and diverse testing with conflicting and confusing results. Mr. Garcia just didn't fit any category. Doctor Allen had not shrugged his shoulders, but kept keen interest in the case, visiting Mr. Garcia almost daily. At first Doctor Joki viewed these visits as an intrusion, but as the case became more puzzling, the resentment diminished and finally vanished and a true partnership in research evolved with Doctor Allen concentrating on the physical and she on the psychological aspect of Mr. Garcia.

"The CAT scan didn't show any abnormalities," Don said as he entered Judy's office.

"Any breakthroughs on your end."

"None." Judy was frustrated. It had been a whole week and she knew nothing.

"Let me bounce off a theory on you. Is it possible that some persons are so attuned to their bodies that they know what is going on in them?"

"Well, that would explain the appendicitis prediction, but how about knowing your name and mine, sometimes?"

"I've thought of that. He is very attuned to his body and can read minds."

"That sounds good, but he can't read minds or he would know our names."

"Maybe not. If we're not thinking of our names when we visit him, he won't be able to read it."

"He can't read minds, or at least he didn't when we tested him for that." Judy Joki shook her head. "I'm stumped. At times he's an idiot and at others, a genius and he has been that way all his life. It was the same thing in school, until he dropped out at sixteen. His teachers, and all remembered him, were all puzzled. Sometimes he aced tests and at others, he bombed them. It was zero or a hundred, nothing in between. His behavior at work," Judy looked at Don and continued reviewing the case, hoping to get a new insight by verbalizing it, "by the way, he's a mechanic, is just as puzzling. His employer loves him, because he works hard and fast and always has the right parts on hand, but sometimes he forgets where he works. He

has been so consistent in knowing what parts he will need, that his employer doesn't even question the list -- he just goes and gets them.

"You know," Doctor Joki continued, "sometimes I wonder if he is even human. He shows absolutely no emotion. He doesn't laugh. He doesn't cry. He doesn't get angry. No emotion. Sometimes I feel that he is an alien or an android. Do you ..."

"Doctor Joki, I have to show you this!" The graduate student, John Ferguson, rushed past Don and handed a paper to Judy. "This is a test you gave us last year and I gave it to Mr. Garcia to see what he could do with it. It's perfect!"

Judy Joki looked at the paper. It was better than perfect, it was exact. Even the phrasing was like hers. Doctor Joki went to her files and took out her master of that test.

"Look at this!" Doctor Joki placed the papers side by side. "It's verbatim -- to the last comma -- only the handwriting is different!" Before Doctor Allen and the graduate student had finished perusing the papers, she grabbed them and headed out the door. "I'm getting to the bottom of this!"

"Mr. Garcia," Doctor Joki entered Hector Garcia's room without knocking, with Doctor Allen and John Ferguson following closely behind. "I want some straight answers!" Judy Joki waved the test paper in front of Hector Garcia. "How did you get the answers to this test?"

"You will show them to me."

"I don't have time for games, Mr. Garcia. How did you get these answers?"

"They are not correct?"

"Don't be coy with me! You know darn well they are right because you copied them. How did you get into my files."

"Doctor Joki," the graduate student said, "he didn't leave this room and I was here while he was taking it."

"Look, Mr. Garcia." Doctor Joki handed Hector the master.

Hector looked over the papers carefully. "They are the same."

"They are more than the same, they are exactly the same. If you are going to cheat, do it right!" Judy Joki grabbed both tests and left the room in a huff.

"Doctor Joki, I swear, he didn't leave the room," John said, following Doctor Joki out of the room. "This was something completely extemporaneous. I found that old test in my desk and I gave it to him!"

Judy Joki stopped in the hall and turned to her companions. "You both saw those tests. What am I supposed to think? Any explanations? Any theories?"

Don and the graduate student shook their heads.

"Maybe he's an idiot savant. John, I want you to get regular college exams in all the different disciplines. If he's an idiot savant, I'm going to find out in what areas!"

The tests were as inconclusive as ever. There was no pattern, no consistency. Nothing fit. Judy Joki leaned back on her chair. Hector Garcia did not fit any category. She would have to forge a new approach, a focused approach. There were two areas of interest, the psychic vision and the amnesia. She would concentrate on the amnesia first. Find out all about the nature of his amnesia, then go and examine the psychic vision. Somehow they were related. But how do you test memory without asking the subject what he remembers? Judy recalled some of the experiments on rats. If they pushed the right button they were rewarded with a treat, if not, they would get a mild shock. It would have to be something of that nature, but if Mr. Garcia can actually see the future, that would make the test invalid. Hypnosis, regression under hypnosis -- why didn't she think of that before! Doctor Joki hypnotized Hector Garcia with relative ease -- an indication of intelligence and cooperation. At last she felt that she was making some progress. "Hector, can you hear me?" "Yes." "Hector, I want you to go back in time to when you were twelve years old." Hector remained calm and quiet. "Hector, can you tell me about it." "No." "Is it something you don't want to tell me?" "No." "Then tell me what you see." "Nothing. I don't remember." "Is there a reason why you don't remember?" "I don't know." Hector remained perfectly calm. "Hector, I want you to back to last Tuesday, when you took my test." "I can't." "Hector can you go back one hour?" "No." "One minute?" "No." Doctor Joki hurriedly brought Hector out of hypnosis. She was completely baffled. Hector Garcia had absolutely no memory, but that was impossible! How could he function without memory? How could he read? Fix cars? Live? Judy felt a chill go down her spine. The possibility that Hector Garcia was an alien being was now very real.

Doctor Joki played the video tape of the hypnotic session for Doctor Allen and John Ferguson, the graduate assistant.

"As you can see," Judy Joki turned the VCR off, "Mr. Garcia has no memory at all. None. He has no past."

"That can't be," Don Allen said. John Ferguson remained quiet and thoughtful.

"I think we have to deal with the possibility that Hector Garcia may not be human at all." "You can't be serious! I've seen his insides. I've seen his blood through a microscope. He's as human as they come."

"Doctor Joki," John Ferguson said, "I'm not sure how this fits in, but yesterday, by mistake, we gave Mr. Garcia a test he had already taken. He had aced that test before, but this time he got zero."

"That doesn't surprise me. He has always been inconsistent."

"Well, I noticed, that whenever we go over the test the following day, he aces it. And we always go over the tests he aces to find out how much more he knows."

"That's it!" Judy Joki banged the top of her desk with her open hand. "That's it! We weren't testing his memory, but his future vision! And he told us, but we wouldn't accept it!"

"What the hell are you talking about?" Don Allen exclaimed.

"Doctor Allen, we've been testing for knowledge, which is based on memory. Mr. Garcia has no memory. He knows the answer to a question only if he gets the answer sometime in the future!"

"Damn! And he told us all along. I thought he had trouble with English and was using the wrong tense! Now his statements make sense!"

"You're right, but now we know what we're testing and now we'll find out the limits of his vision."

"Twenty two to twenty six hours," Doctor Joki said, the moment Doctor Allen entered the clinic. "Is that all?" "I think it's pretty good, if you can tell what is going to happen one day in advance." "Yes, if you have a memory, but Hector has none. I'm amazed that he has functioned so well, almost passing for normal, with only a few hours of knowledge. He must be super intelligent to compensate for that handicap." "I hadn't thought of it that way, but you're right. Hector has literally lived one day at a time -- successfully." "What's the next step?" "I'm going to put him under hypnosis and go to the future!" "I'd like to take an EEG during the session." "Good idea. Doctor Allen, can you work the machine yourself?" "Yes, I think so." "Good. I want to keep this confidential. We're onto something big!"

Doctor Allen put the last electrode in place then sat by the instrument and nodded to Doctor Joki that everything was ready. He flipped the switch on and started recording. Hector was in a relaxed state and while his brain activity was still much greater than average, it was less by half of his previous EEG's. Hector's transition into the hypnotic state was even easier than the first time. It was almost as if he had found a way to rest. As Hector passed through the different hypnotic stages, his brain activity diminished to average then to below average in the deepest state of hypnosis. Doctor Joki followed the agreed script and tried to have Hector regress in time. The traces recording the brain activity almost became a flat line with only glitches when he was spoken to. It was as if Hector were in a void, a deep, dreamless sleep.

"Hector, now I want you to go two hours into the future. What are you doing?"

His brain activity immediately jumped to fever pitch, but still well below his normal waking state. Don marked the spot on the chart with an arrow and a note.

"I am washing my hands getting ready to go to lunch."

"Hector, go eighteen hours into the future and tell me what you are doing."

"I am asleep in my room. No, that has just changed. I am awake and crying."

"Why are you crying?"

"I don't know."

"Hector, what will you be doing in twenty four hours."

"I'm in the park."

"What are you doing in the park?"

"I'm sitting on a bench talking to Doctor Allen."

"Hector, I want you to go forty eight hours into the future." "Doctor Joki," Don said urgently in a loud whisper, "that's not in the script!" Judy Joki motioned for silence.

"I can't," Hector said. "Why not?" "It's locked." "Doctor Joki, I need to talk to you.

Now!" Don said in a whisper, but still firmly. "Hector, just relax for a moment. I'll be right back." Judy Joki went to the corner of the room where Doctor Allen was

waiting for her. "Doctor Joki, that's not in the script we agreed to. We both agreed to stop at the limit." "You don't have to whisper." "There's too much here!" Don

Allen continued whispering. "We agreed we'd go in stages. His brain activity is already at the limit we've recorded for him! I don't know what will happen if there

is more." "And you never will, if you don't go beyond it!" Judy Joki was also

whispering. "Look we're at a threshold of something really big. Let's not back down." "I don't want to back down, but let's do it in stages, well planned stages.

We have to digest what we have now, then proceed."

"What is there to digest? He just told us something was locked. Let's find out what. I won't go more than forty eight hours."

"Okay, forty eight hours."

Hector was relaxed with his eyes closed when the doctors returned to their original station.

"Hector, can you hear me?" Doctor Joki asked.

"Yes."

"I want you to go to the future forty eight hours."

"I can't. It's locked."

"What is locked?"

"The gate is locked."

"Can you unlock the gate."

"Yes."

"Hector, unlock the gate."

"I'm not supposed to."

"It's okay, Hector, I give you permission. Unlock the gate. Where are you now?"

"I'm in a grocery store. It changed. I'm running down the road."

"Hector, how far into the future can you see?"

Don immediately stared at Doctor Joki, but remained quiet. Brain activity had increased exponentially with each advancing step and now it exceeded the

capacity of the electroencephalograph. Don switched the machine off. "It's blurry. It changes too much." Hector became agitated and restless. "Are you saying that there are a lot of futures?" "No, but it changes. It changes!" "Select one. Stabilize it and tell me what you see." "I can't!" Hector grabbed his head pulling off some of the electrodes. Hector sat erect on the chair, eyes open and with beads of perspiration forming across his forehead. "It hurts," he yelled. "Relax Hector. I want you to come to the present." Hector immediately relaxed, closed his eyes and laid back on the chair. "Hector, when I count to three, I want you to awake and feel refreshed. One, two, three."

Doctor Joki was reviewing the video tape of the session when Doctor Allen returned after giving Hector a physical.

"He's okay."

"Of course he's okay," Judy Joki said impatiently. "He told us he'll be washing his hands in a couple of hours!"

"He also said he'll be crying in eighteen!"

"We're born into this world crying. That will make him human, probably for the first time in his life!" Judy Joki turned her attention back to the video tape. "And now you believe him. A bona fide psychic!"

"Absolutely," Judy turned off the VCR and faced Don, "but his not a psychic -- at least not the way we think of psychics. He doesn't know your future, my future or anybody else's -- just his. It's more like he remembers his future very much like we remember our past. I remember mine, but I don't remember yours."

"But our past is static."

"That's right. It doesn't change and we can't change it, but he can change his future!"

"Or other factors can change it! Doctor Joki when did you decide to go beyond the twenty four hour limit?"

"I'm not sure. It was an impromptu thing."

"I bet it was right after you told him to go eighteen hours into the future. His vision changed at that moment. He somehow sensed your change of plans! He knows his future at that instant, but it can change moment to moment. That's why the vision gets blurrier as he goes further into the future -- more factors come into play!"

Don, pensively, shook his head slowly. "How in the hell does he do that?"

"I don't know. The only thing I can figure is that the part of the brain that is used to store memories is used for this in his case. What I find amazing is that the subconscious locked the limit of vision so that he could function without going crazy."

"Doctor Joki this is big! I mean really big. Bigger than you or me. What do we do now?"

"I agree -- it's enormous. We have made a major discovery. I suggest we sleep on it, then let's get together and start documenting this," Doctor Joki groped for a word, "this phenomenon."

Hector Garcia sat on his bed and gently rubbed his temples. Though he had awoken refreshed from the hypnotic session, his strength sapped during the course of the day and this condition was further aggravated by a dull headache that had pounded him doggedly since mid afternoon. By eight o'clock he felt drained and he collapsed on the bed and fell into a deep, dreamless sleep.

In the wee hours of the morning Hector emerged from his deep sleep to the edge of wakefulness. His headache was gone and there he remained in a state of delicious relaxation. Images began to flood his mind, but not the sharp, jarring scenes that gave him headaches, but pleasant, pastoral scenes in soft focus. He saw himself walking, almost floating past an open gate. The image faded and a new scene developed, which was quickly replaced by another and the further he progressed past the gate, the faster and more jolting were the changes. He had to select one, but how? Hector tried to mentally grasp one of the scene, but this effort only accelerated the changes quickly becoming an dizzying blur. He had to stop. Hector relaxed and the rate of change diminished, but did not stop. Hector focused his

attention on a passing tree and immediately the image stabilized. The background changed, but the tree remained steady. He saw, for the first time, the sun rise and the sun set. He saw the leaves of the tree turn from green to brilliant shades of yellows, then he sadly watched as the leaves dropped leaving the tree naked and dead. He felt overwhelming joy when it bloomed again.

Hector withdrew his attention from the tree and images began changing rapidly. He was attracted by the cry of a baby and the image steadied once more. He saw the baby crawl, then take its first tentative steps with the encouragement of its mother and fall and be consoled by the mother. Hector watched as the baby grew from babyhood to boyhood and finally to manhood. It was a continuous process and not a discrete one!

Once Hector shifted his attention from the baby, the images changed rapidly, but he remained relaxed. Now he had the technique. To steady the image, all he had to do was to shift the perspective.

Hector focused on his mother and was surprised that she came in a package, a family which included him. He saw his entire family, his brothers and sisters, his uncles and nephews and nieces, come and go, hug and kiss and fight, celebrate and cry, but all in a secure envelope. For the first time Hector felt -- well, he didn't know what he felt -- it was like -- he didn't know what it was like either -- well, he just felt comfortable and was glad that he existed.

Hector didn't know where she came from, but suddenly he saw a beautiful woman across the room. The slender figure, the large brown eyes, the smooth creamy complexion and the smile, especially the smile, all combined to form a field of attraction was complete and inescapable. And when he touched her hand, he knew she was the one and every abstract emotion that he had never felt, became real and was concentrated in the groin. Their lips touched and the communion was complete, a merging of body and soul and, for the first time, Hector had a reason to live. As quickly as the image had appeared, it vaporized.

"No!" Hector yelled, jumping out of bed. "No!" Now fully awake, Hector calmed down and surveyed the room. He walked slowly to his bed and sat down. He longed for something that was almost in his grasp, at the tip of his tongue, but he didn't know what. Hector took deep breaths and relaxed. Once more images flooded his mind repeating his previous journey, but it wasn't the same. Something had changed. He didn't know what, but something had been lost. Hector felt a void and he started crying softly.

"What happened?" Don, breathing hard, blurted out the moment he stepped into Doctor Joki's office. "Mr. Garcia is gone," Judy Joki said in a matter of fact manner. "Yes, you told me that over the phone! When did it happen."

"Sometime last night. When the nurse checked the room this morning, he was gone."

"How could this happen? Don't you have security around here?"

"Doctor Allen," Judy Joki said, firmly, "this is a clinic, not a prison!" Then more softly, almost to herself, she added, "Besides, I don't think a prison could hold him."

"Well," Don Allen said, a little more calmly, "we have to find him. Have you called the police?"

"No, I have not called the police. You forget, we have a very special patient here. Mr. Garcia will not be found, unless he wants to be found."

"We have to do something! He could hurt himself!"

"He has survived twenty four years without our help, but there is a concern there." Doctor Joki tapped the top of her desk with a pencil. "I blundered." Judy looked at Don, who didn't respond, but simply waited for her to continue. "When I brought him out of hypnosis yesterday, I didn't tell to close and lock the gate."

"Then he could possibly hurt himself! We have to search for him."

"You will have to search for him. He is going to talk to you in a park sometime today. He said he would. And I don't want to do anything that may become a factor and change that. That's why I didn't call the police. You will have to talk him into coming back!"

Don knew that the meeting would take place around ten in the morning, which was about twenty four hours after the hypnotic session, but he had no idea which park. There were three good candidates, but he eliminated one for being too close to the clinic. That left two and both had benches. He selected one and hoped that Hector

would somehow sense his decision and the meeting would take place, unless some other factor interfered and changed the future.

Don had been walking the park since nine o'clock. It was already ten twenty and he had not encountered Hector. Something must have happened. He sat at a bench and looked toward the lake. It was a still day and only the ripples caused by ducks swimming disturbed the glass-like surface of the water. For a moment he forgot Hector, Doctor Joki, the clinic, the whole world except for those three ducks swimming by the edge of the lake.

"Hello, Doctor Allen."

Don was jarred out of his reverie and turned in the direction of the voice to see Hector Garcia approaching him. Hector sat next to Don.

"Are you okay?"

Hector nodded, but his demeanor belied his nod. His eyebrows were furrowed and he rubbed his forehead with one hand. "Do you have a headache?"

"Yes, a dull one, but it'll go away."

"Hector, you have to come back to the clinic. We blundered. We unlocked the limit of your vision and didn't lock it again."

"Yes, I know. I can now steady the images and can go years into the future."

"Hector, you mustn't do that! During that brief period that we had you go more than twenty four hours, your brain activity was so high, we couldn't measure it. I don't know the long range effects. It could be very dangerous! Come back to the clinic and let us reset the limit."

"No!" Hector responded without hesitation. "I don't want to go back! I don't want to live that way!" Hector turned his eyes from Don and looked toward the lake.

"At first I was concerned with the accuracy of my visions and the factors that might influence it. I wanted to ensure an outcome, but now I see that it doesn't matter. I can see my future, but I don't know if it will really occur because the moment it happens, it's gone -- without a trace. I live in the future. It is there that I feel passion -- love, joy, sadness, anger. It is only there that I am alive. I will not give that up!"

"Well, Hector, just come to the clinic so that we can check you out."

"Goodbye, Doctor Allen." Hector Garcia stood up.

"Are you sure you're doing the right thing?"

"Yes," Hector said, smiling, "very sure."

"Will you come by and visit?"

"No. You are not in my future and soon I will forget you. Very soon -- the moment I turn around."

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