

Un-Anticipated - Part II of III
Copyright 2007 - Martha Mitchell

“How are we doing, today?” Dr. Tan’s question rolled off his tongue, like a line in a play. He started to pull back the blanket and sheet that covered her, looking at her for approval to do so.

“I beg your pardon?” Sheila looked at him, as if he had just undressed her with his eyes.

“It’s just a simple medical exam,” he explained.

“But with him in here?” She pulled up the blanket, covering herself, as if she were naked.

“Do you mind, Mr. Porter?” He ushered him out with his hand, as if he were waving at the floor.

“Not at all, not at all. I’ll just be right outside, if you need anything, okay?” He left, feeling useless, as if his services were not needed any longer.

After the door closed behind him they got down to business. “Nice get-up, Dr. Tan.” She smiled. “Now where’s the computer chip? Did you get it when you were ripping out my appendix?” She talked roughly, as if she were used to bossing him around.

“Of course, darling,” he soothed. “What do you think I am, an amateur?” He tapped the outside of his pocket assuring her the chip was inside.

“What’s the next step? I’m dying to get out of these hospital clothes.”

“It wasn’t easy finding you. Just cool your jets. There’s a cop in the hall and he’s

looking for an agent. That would be you.” He spoke to her as if he were used to filling her in on things she was not aware of.

“So how do you propose I get out of here? Folding her arms, she demanded an answer.

“Don’t worry, I got ya covered.” He proceeded to bandage her face with roll gauze. Slowly she began to resemble a mummy.

Wheeling her out of the room, they encountered the reporter, Mr. Porter. “Is she okay?” His concern seemed genuine.

“Just some routine testing,” he announced as they rolled right by the officer, stationed near the nurse’s desk. The hospital loud speaker requested that a doctor report for surgery.

As the two slipped into the elevator, that had just emptied itself of passengers, the doors closed like curtains on their matinee performance.

“Now what, Einstein?” she was used to the routine again, by now, secretly hoping she didn’t belong to such a secret organization. Somehow they always found her no matter what seemed to happen to her.

“The papers said that you died in the crash. That gives us a little time before they figure out what really happened.”

“Which is....?” She was waiting for his response like a trick-or-treater waiting for candy.

“Come on, did you forget so soon?” He talked to her as if she really were a trick-or-treater, and needed to be told what to do.

“I’ve just been in a crash and suffered amnesia, and you expect me to know what is going on?” She was beginning to get really annoyed with him, whoever he thought he was.

“Okay, I’ll give you a hint.” The doors to the elevator opened like the curtains on opening night of a Broadway show.

‘Showtime!’ she thought. ‘I’ve got to put on a good show. For what? I don’t know. I just want to get out of here.’ She was starting to feel claustrophobic.

“Do you remember where you were headed when the bus crashed?” He inquired like a reporter himself, trying to keep his voice low as they passed two detectives in plain clothes. They were in the lobby, trying to fit in while reading magazines. It was so obvious they were not visitors.

“I assume I was on my way home. It seemed to be a routine bus ride.” He rolled her outside and onto the mechanical ramp leading to the ambulance. “Where are you taking me?” She felt helpless.

“Routine testing, remember? You forget so easily these days.” He belittled her and she felt small. It seemed this comment was for any spectator. The real conversation continued under his breath in hushed tones.

“Yes it was routine. You were supposed to make a deposit at Chase Bank on Main Street,” he whispered, hurriedly.

“And I didn’t?” She continued to act like she didn’t know what he was talking about. She was thinking of a way to get out this life she hated. ‘Maybe playing dumb was the

answer,' she thought.

“No, that’s when the bus crashed.” He informed her. She felt stupid, just as he intended her to feel. “Where have you been? “In La-La land?” he answered his own question.

‘What a clever guy,’ she thought sarcastically. “Apparently.” She said out loud, hoping he could not read her thoughts. The ramp ascended, carrying her, and the chair up to ambulance level. Suddenly she felt trapped, not wanting to play along with his plan.

“You know, you seem familiar, but I’m not clear about the things you mentioned. Maybe I should stay here a little longer, until I remember everything.”

“You’re not going anywhere, now get in.” He rolled the chair into the ambulance and slammed the door shut, banging on it twice with his open hand.

‘This must be code for something, like ‘She’s in. Let’s go,’ she thought. At the moment the door slammed, it became dark inside the vehicle. The walls lit up to show a computer system with lights flashing and radar screens scanning something. Oddly, this felt familiar, but in a sickening way. It was all too clear.

They turned the corner quickly slipping off into the night. She could feel the van making several turns, obviously trying to lose anyone on their trail. ‘Who would be on their trail? Perhaps the reporter, was looking for ‘his story,’ the police, some kind of enemy chasing them for whatever reason?’ She wanted out. She did not want to know.

In the corner of the van, near the back doors, she noticed an image of an older woman on one of the screens. It was the woman from the bus. ‘Why was she there? Was she in on this operation, too?’ She was wearing a different coat from the last time she saw her

on the bus.

“She’s in a coma at the hospital with the other chip in her leg. We’ve got to find a reason to have Dr. Tan operate on her leg.” She heard the computer operators discussing the next plan.

“I could go visit her.” She chimed in looking for a reason to get out of this mess on wheels.

“No, we just got you back. We can’t afford to lose ya.” They shot back at her.

Turning toward the front of the van she noticed they had come to a stop in front of a Chinese restaurant. She decided to make a run for it. Stepping out of the chair and opening the side door at the same time, she made a jump out on to the sidewalk. Her bare feet felt the cold water and pavement below snapping her into the cold reality that lay ahead.

Twenty steps later, her feet felt the warm fuzz of the carpet inside the Chinese restaurant. She could sense the annoying agents tailing her, like hounds on a raccoon hunt. She had to get different clothes and some shoes, definitely shoes. She slipped into the ‘employees only’ door to the right of the entrance. She knew where everything in this restaurant was. It was her favorite. The agents ran past the hidden employee door into the kitchen and out the back, scanning the restaurant with their radar vision for any sign of her. She had lost them.

Meanwhile, she dressed quickly, slipping on a pair of ‘too-tight’ shoes and ‘too-loose’ pants she tied them around her waist. The shoes would have to do for now. The shirt fit

and the kitchen hair net would be helpful in her escape. 'Now, where to?' She thought. I need that chip from his pocket and the chip from the lady's leg. She stopped herself in mid-thought. 'Do I really want to get into the game, again, or do I want something different? I don't want that,' she thought. 'I must be on auto pilot.'

Still standing in the employee room she spotted a pair of scissors. She decided to cut her hair. She went into the attached bathroom and began clipping away. When she was finished, the pile on the floor looked like a small furry animal. She heard the ambulance siren off in the distance. She hoped it was the one she had just left.

She covered her cut hair with a hair net. It wasn't the best haircut ever. but it would do for now. She slipped into the kitchen, getting to work filling water glasses for the hostess. She knew, generally, what the routine of the restaurant was, and decided to blend in. As the cold ice caressed her hands, she felt warm, knowing she had a 'normal place' to belong to.

To be Continued ...