

WHO AM I?

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When I woke up, I was confused. Everything was different. I did not even remember going to sleep. As I looked around the room, nothing looked familiar. The room had dark curtains that were covering the windows. Only a gleam of light came through a small tear in the material. There was just enough light filtering through the drapes to see that I was in a very small room. What I could see was the bed I was laying on, a small desk with a chair across the room and a door.

I got up and walked to the door. It was locked. I looked for a light switch, but I could not find one. I searched the desk, but it was empty and there was not anything on top of it.

I sat down on the bed and tried to recall how I had gotten here.

Confused, I thought to myself, “What was I doing before I fell asleep last night?”

Everything was confusing. I vaguely remembered going out with some friends for dinner. As hard as I tried, I could not remember what day it was. I was so frustrated trying to figure out how I got here.

Just then, there was a noise at the door. I could hear a key being inserted into the lock from the outside. Then the light went on. It was so bright that for a moment I was blinded. When my eyes adjusted to the bright light, there were two big men in white jackets entering the room.

“Time for your shower, Miss Jones,” the first man, said to me.

“Huh? Shower? What do you mean?” I asked, very confused at what was

happening.

I sat down on the floor refusing to go.

“It’s time for you to go to the shower and get ready for your meeting with Dr. Andrews. He’s waiting for you,” the first man responded as they each took one of my arms and lifted me off the floor.

“Why did you call me Miss Jones? That isn’t my name,” I asked the men as they were carrying me out of the room. “Let me down, I can walk on my own. Why are you hurting me?”

I started to scream at them.

Even though I was kicking and wiggling, they were just too big and strong. They dropped me down inside of a bathroom, handed me some clothes and a towel, and then told me to get ready.

I turned to yell at them, but they slammed the door shut.

As I studied the room, I saw two sinks, two toilets, and two shower stalls. I thought that it was strange that there was no mirror. I looked inside the first shower stall and saw a bottle of shampoo and some soap.

Even though the door was closed, I went back to make sure it was locked. It was not locked, and there was no button for me to lock it.

I got undressed and took a hot shower. It felt so good to be clean, but I was still confused about where I was and what was happening to me.

“Why had they called me Miss Jones?” I thought.

Then I realized, I did not remember my name.

“Was I really Miss Jones?” I asked myself. It just didn’t seem right.

After I got dressed in the sweatpants and sweatshirt they gave me, I knocked on the door. The men opened the door and escorted me down the hall to an office. The sign above the door said, “Dr. Andrews” and under it said “Psychology”.

“Why was I going to a psychologist?” I asked myself, feeling even more confused.

As I walked into the office, there was a pleasant looking man with black glasses

and dark hair sitting behind a desk. He was smoking a cigarette and reading a chart. He did not notice me right away.

After a few moments, the doctor looked up from his papers and said, “Ah, I’m sorry. I was just reading. Come in and sit-down Miss Jones.”

I sat down and just stared at him while he continued to read.

“Quite an impressive file you have here Miss Jones. I haven’t read anything this interesting for quite some time,” Dr. Andrews informed me.

“So, what exactly does the file say?” I asked.

“Sorry, that’s confidential,” he replied, as he placed the folder face down on the desk.

Changing the subject, he asked, “So how’d you sleep last night?”

“I don’t really know sir. I woke up in a strange bed in a strange place. Then two big thugs carried me to the bath. I haven’t even eaten breakfast yet. By the way, what is the time? And what day is this?” I asked.

The doctor responded, “We’ll get to that soon enough Miss Jones....”

“Why do you call me Miss Jones?” I interrupted.

“When you came here you couldn’t tell us your name, so we gave you the name Miss. Jones. You didn’t have any identification and we couldn’t find your family. Do you remember your name now?” Dr. Andrews asked.

“Um, I’m not sure. I don’t remember much, just something about going out with my friends for dinner last night, or so I think,” I tried to answer his question.

“Miss Jones, you’ve been here for five months. Every morning it’s the same. You wake up in a strange place and you don’t know your name. Last night you were here. You had dinner in the dining hall. Do you remember that?” Dr. Andrews informed me.

“I was here? Are you sure? I remember going to Alfie’s Pizzeria with my friends last night. Why are you telling me I was here?” I asked, very confused.

“Miss Jones, every day you tell us the same story. You have had a serious brain injury from a car accident. We aren’t sure just what the problem is, but we go through the

same thing every day. You come here confused and lost. We tell you your whole story, and after that, you understand what's going on. However, the next day it's the same. You come in here confused not knowing what happened to you. Would you like to see a tape of the first day you were here?" he asked.

"I guess so," was my simple reply.

He started the video and I watched myself. There was another doctor asking me questions. He was asking me the same questions and I was saying the same things.

"Is that REALLY me?" I questioned the doctor.

In the video, I had a bandage on my head and my arm was in a sling.

"Yep, that's you. I've just taken over your case. Dr. Hamilton, who you see on the tape, has taken another assignment." Dr. Andrews answered.

"I have a question for you. Over the past few years I've been doing extensive research on memory dysfunction after severe trauma to the brain. I've been studying your case and I think I have a procedure that will help you remember who you are and restore your memory. Are you interested in doing this? It's a bit radical, but if my theories are correct, we should be able to help you," the doctor presented his ideas to me.

"What do you have to do?" I asked.

"It involves surgery. We need to reestablish contact between the two halves of your brain. It seems that some of the nerves that carry signals from one side of your brain to the other are damaged. It has been a while since your accident, so I may not be able to reconstruct all of them, but I am sure we can improve your memory a lot. The scans of your brain show us there has been remarkable healing on its own. I think we can help it along a little bit." Dr. Andrews explained.

"When do you want to do this?" I asked.

"Today, if that's OK with you," was his reply.

"What have I got to lose? I don't like not knowing who I am," I responded.

"Well, all surgery is dangerous. We could fail and leave you like a vegetable, but I'm confident that this will help you. The risks are not that great," the doctor tried to

reassure me.

I agreed to the surgery. I was taken to another room to prepare. I was not given anything to eat or drink. The worst part was that I had to have my head shaved. I watched as my curly brown hair fell to the floor after being cut by the clippers.

I was placed on a gurney, and I was wheeled down a long corridor to the operating room. The doors burst open and inside were a team of doctors and nurses. They were in blue scrubs and had masks on their faces. I saw they were smiling under the masks. This helped to relax me a little.

The anesthesiologist put the oxygen mask over my face and told me to count backwards from 100. I think I got to ninety-one when I fell asleep.

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The room was spinning, and I felt nauseous. Everything was blurry. I tried to talk, but there was a tube in my mouth. I looked around the room. It was empty. I fell back asleep.

The next time I woke up, there was someone leaning over me and looking at my face.

“Are you OK?” a voice asked.

I mumbled, “I think so. Can I have some water?”

I was given some water from a straw. The tube in my mouth was now gone. I had better vision as I looked around the room. Everyone there was smiling at me.

The doctor told me I needed to rest for a while and then he would explain everything to me. I fell back asleep.

When I woke up again, I remembered that my real name was Gina Harris. I told the doctor my phone number and my husband’s name.

Later that day, I suddenly saw a familiar face.

“David! Where am I?” I blurted out.

The man I had called David started to yell, “She recognizes me! I can’t believe it, she recognizes me!”

He began to cry.

“Of course, why shouldn’t I recognize you, you’re my husband. What’s going on here?” I asked.

My friends and family surrounded me. I found out that I had been in a car accident on the way home from dinner at Alfie’s Pizzeria and that I had sustained a serious brain injury.

I had been alone in the car, and when it burst into flames, all my personal information was destroyed. My family thought that I had burned in the car. Someone found me on the road far from the car and called for help. I was the hospital for five months.

Dr. Andrews heard about my case and decided to try his new surgical method.

It took a couple of months for me to regain most of my memory. Strangely, the memories of the five months in the hospital were gone except that last day. The best part was that I was home with my family.

Thank you, Dr. Andrews for helping me find out who I was!

VOCABULARY: (*Match the word its definition*)

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. gleam ____ | a. ray of light, shine |
| 2. wiggle ____ | b. sift, clean |
| 3. trauma ____ | c. not working correctly |
| 4. sustain ____ | d. tube for drinking |
| 5. straw ____ | e. hold up, support |
| 6. filter ____ | f. damage, injury |
| 7. dysfunction ____ | g. know, remember |
| 8. surgery ____ | h. remember the past |
| 9. recognize ____ | i. an operation |
| 10. memories ____ | j. twist, shake |

TRUE / FALSE:

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1. I was on a vacation with my family. | T / F |
| 2. My name is Miss Jones. | T / F |
| 3. I had surgery to fix my brain. | T / F |
| 4. Dr. Rodriguez was a psychologist. | T / F |
| 5. My husband's name was Daniel. | T / F |
| 6. I lost my memory because of a car accident. | T / F |
| 7. I took a bath after getting up. | T / F |
| 8. I went home to be with my family. | T / F |
| 9. I was in the hospital for twelve months. | T / F |
| 10. I had surgery on my stomach. | T / F |

MULTIPLE CHOICE:

1. What is her husband's name? _____
 - a) Bill
 - b) Frank
 - c) David
 - d) Daniel

2. What caused her injury? _____
 - a) car accident
 - b) falling down the stairs
 - c) assault
 - d) big storm

3. Who was her original doctor? _____
 - a) Dr. Grumman
 - b) Dr. Hamilton
 - c) Dr. Andrews
 - d) Dr. Jones

4. Where was she for the past 5 months? _____
 - a) in school
 - b) at work
 - c) in my room
 - d) in a hospital

COMPREHENSION: *(Write a complete sentence to answer the question.)*

1. What was the doctor's name that helped her?

2. What did she find in the shower stall?

3. Where was she eating dinner the night of her accident?

4. How many men carried her to the bathroom?

5. What happened to her that caused her memory loss?

6. What did the doctor have to do to fix her memory?

7. How long had she been in the hospital?

8. Who was in her room when she woke up with my memory?

9. How low did she count before falling asleep in surgery?

10. What they do that showed damage to her brain?
