

Lance was *fey*. That was the only explanation, although he hadn't understood the word as a child.

"You have to have this power. It came to you from your great grandmother," his mother's sister had explained one day. "Do you see, boy? Your mother and I sat vigil on the old lady's bedside, the days before she passed away, and your mother in torment with expecting child. The old lady had the power of second sight and she gifted it to you."

He hadn't been impressed, either by the explanation of his problem or the problem itself, but Problem it was and always had been throughout his childhood and all his schooldays

Maybe it could have been true, because Great Grandmother Tucker had been some sort of mystic in Jamaica, long before her sons had brought her to exile in damp and dirty London. Lance's mother had held a reputation too, of being able to predict the sex and weight of a baby, but Lance was the son of a Jamaican mother and a red haired Irish farmer's son and he had no such powers that might bring money into the family purse.

Saleable powers or not, Lance had found out early in life about his own gift, his problem as he knew it.

Somehow, he had his unnatural way of feeling the pain that others were feeling.

Can you imagine how frightening it is to catch a headache? Or to sit patiently in your schoolroom and suddenly feel ill? How many times had Lance come home crying in his early years, limping or with pains in his stomach that no doctor could explain! With nobody to blame, it was as though another was calling, but no one was there. "There's absolutely nothing that I can find. He's either making it up, or he has some mental problem." Lance had heard it so many times as a child that he never went to the doctors now he was a teenager..

All last night, a week before his nineteenth birthday, he had tossed and turned on the settee in his aunt's tiny living room in far off Birmingham and had worried. The problem had returned after three years of peace, and he had tried to search for the reason. It wasn't as he had felt in the infants school in the year before his mother had died, eaten away by her stomach cancer that had echoed in his own body as sickness and pain. It wasn't the terrible chest pains and the blinding headache that had come to him as his father experienced a heart attack and fell from the roof where he was working. This was different, and he couldn't remember anything like it.

Yesterday he had been standing at his apprentice workbench in Slough, enjoying the thrill of shaping a piece of raw metal into a useful tool. It had been an hour into overtime when he had felt a heavy blow, and found himself laying on the floor as if thrown there. He had stood up and had somehow found himself at his single room, pushing a few things into his pockets and taking his savings from their hiding place in the wardrobe. By midnight he had come to himself again, fully awake and at the same time tired out, and standing on his aunt's doorstep without even knowing how he had found his way there - or why.

"It's agony," he explained to his aunt as they sat at the breakfast table. "You remember, how a few days after my appendix was removed, I had the pains again on the other side and it was even worse? Now it's as if someone has pushed a sword into my body."

"No boy. This is one of the times when there isn't a reason." Aunt Tucker was pretty when she was trying to help, and her smile helped a little. "We're all as happy and as healthy as we can be."

Lance couldn't eat. He tried to, but it was as though his stomach was bruised, so he turned to talking.

“Tell me about the time before I was born?” He asked. “Maybe understanding that will help me to see what is wrong?”

“There's nothing much to tell, but it was really emotional around that time. You know you were to be adopted?”

Lance hadn't known.

“It's true. That father of yours was a Catholic, and had a wife in Ireland. Our father, your grandfather, wasn't happy about it. Us being pure blooded and all he wasn't going to let your mother disgrace us, so he arranged it all. You were to be collected as soon as you were born.”

“What made him change his mind?”

“Grandmother Tucker, it was. She who gave you the gift. I was there and heard her last words.”

Lance couldn't listen for a moment. There had been a sudden wild whirling in his head and now he felt faint. He recovered to feel his aunt's arm around him and a cup in front of him. He took a sip of warm sweet tea and it tasted like nectar. He felt a sudden pain in his arm and nearly swept the cup from her hand as he clapped his hand to the spot.

“Easy, Lance, you're just having another turn.”

He sat back, feeling calmer and less tired. He pulled out his handkerchief, spilling the contents of his pocket on the floor, and smiled as he wiped sweat from his brow.

“What did she say?”

Aunt Tucker cocked her head to one side and looked at him. It was as though the attack had never happened.

“Do you know, it was a puzzle to me when I think about it. It was a bit rambling, but your mother understood it.”

“Yes, but what was it that she said?”

“*Keep one child for me!* Those were her very words.” Aunt Tucker nodded. “And after that she said something even more odd. *One day he will save the other!*”

Aunt Tucker looked curiously at the few objects that her nephew had brought with him. Like someone fleeing from a burning house he had chosen the most peculiar things. He picked up the photograph of his mother that had been inside his blood donor card and placed them side by side on the table. The gold chain with his great grandmother's locket and his father's gold sovereign had landed by Aunt Tucker's feet and she picked them up.

“Is that your whole life?” She asked, sounding a little shocked as she laid them beside the other things.

Lance looked blindly toward the table top. Why had he chosen those things that he never even looked at? The donor card he could understand, his unusual blood group was a matter of pride and he'd been able to help people several times, by why had he dug in the back of his wardrobe to find the other things?

The telephone rang.

“That'll be your firm wanting to know why you aren't there, I'll be bound!” Exclaimed Aunt Tucker as she walked across to pick up the instrument. “I'll tell them you aren't well.”

It was Lance's supervisor. The tinny voice was quite audible in the quiet room and Aunt Tucker greeted the elderly man and repeated his name.

“Yes he's here, but he's not at all well.”

There was a short pause while the telephone voice explained something. She looked doubtful.

"I'll talk to him. It's my fault and I'd better take what's coming to me." Lance was standing, holding out his hand.

"It's not that. They want you for something else."

Lance took the phone.

"Hello? Lance?" The supervisor sounded relieved when Lance said it was.

"It's the police, they've been looking for you everywhere since last night. They need you as a blood donor and nobody could find you. Then this morning young Tim here said that you hadn't felt well and that you had an aunt in Birmingham. Are you well enough to help?"

Lance felt a little insulted. It had been about the only thing he had ever been able to give and he wasn't going to stop now.

"Where is it? Will they fetch me?"

"Now I've reached you, yes. Curious, it can't be more than a few minutes from you. It's in Birmingham where you are. A boy about your age. In a car accident about half past six last night. They sounded pretty desperate when I heard from them last night."

Lance had no doubts, and he said so. His supervisor read out the details of the hospital and Lance repeated them to Aunt Tucker.

"I'll take you!" She exclaimed. "We'll be there in my car long before he can phone through to the police."

"We'll go straight there. Will you let them know we're coming?" Lance said into the phone, but he barely heard the reply as he put it back on its rest and followed her from the room.

Almost without thinking he grabbed his things from the table and thrust them back into his pocket.

"Mr Tucker? The doctor will be pleased that you are here so quickly. We were getting very worried. He'll be pleased too that you are the same ethnic group. That may help more. Pity you had to come from London. He's a nice kid and he could do with a friend."

The nurse rattled on as they walked at a fast speed along corridors. Aunt Tucker let them rush on ahead and caught up in the Intensive Care Unit as they waited for a tall Asian doctor to finish talking to a group of white coated medical students. He turned to Lance as the nurse interrupted the discourse.

He looked at Lance in a most odd way.

"You seem to me to be exactly the person we're looking for." said the doctor, shaking his hand. "We have a boy your age from a car crash. His name is Lloyd. He had the gearstick in his stomach and he's lost a lot of blood. Yours will do him a lot more good than the stuff we can give him. Let's get started."

It was nearly ten o'clock next morning when the telephone rang again. Lance had slept well and peacefully and now he was eating a good breakfast. For the first time in his life he felt whole, and he was enjoying the feeling. He watched as Aunt Tucker went to the phone and saw how she smiled as she listened.

"It's that nice doctor again. His patient is awake and feeling much better, and the doctor would like you to meet. I'll tell him we'll be along in half an hour or so, shall I?"

The patient had been moved into a pleasant sunlit ward this morning and, apart from the barrel shaped cage that was keeping the weight of the bedclothes from his injured body, he looked normal. As the doctor led him to the bedside, Lance saw that the boy had the same light brown colour and straight dark hair that had set him aside from other children. There was something about the face too that was familiar. He stopped. The boy opened his eyes and he looked into his own eyes!

It was like a mirror. It was impossible. But it was happening.

Lance stood open mouthed as the boy spoke.

“I knew you'd hear me calling. I've been waiting for you.”

The voice was his too!

Suddenly it all came to him. The only possible explanation. Tears came into his eyes as he gripped the limp hand that came to touch his. Great Grandmother's words made sense now. Keep *one* for me? He will save the *other*? Simple, if you realised that mother had kept both her promises, to give her child for adoption and to keep her child too.

He took the photograph and little gold chain with its momentoes from his pocket and laid them on the covers where the boy could see them.

“Hello Twin!” He said, quietly. “Yes, I'm here. At last.”