

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

written by

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FADE IN:

INT. MEDICAL FACILITY - DAY

SIMON ROSENTHAL walks into the room which has a table in the middle. He is in a medical gown, is older, white, worn down by the years. In the room are three people, two women and a man.

The first woman is DR. LESLIE STONE. She is tall, white, brunette, and very pretty. She is in her late forties. The second woman is a nurse, CAROL. She is Hispanic, shorter, middle aged.

The man is DR. HARVEY COLLINS. He is black, medium build, mid thirties, and rather intense looking.

Simon walks in and sits on the table.

LESLIE

All set?

Simon nods.

SIMON

Got to admit, I'm a little scared, but it's better than the alternative, you know.

HARVEY

Don't be concerned. It's perfectly safe

SIMON

Well, you don't really know that, do you?

LESLIE

I'm sorry?

SIMON

You don't really know. I mean, you've never woke anyone up yet, have you?

LESLIE

Well, no. But that's the whole idea. We won't revive you until we have a cure for you.

SIMON

I realize that. And that's why I said it's better than the alternative. But to my point, you can't really say for sure that this is safe. We won't know, for sure, until I wake up.

Carol walks over to him.

CAROL

Let's lay you down Mr. Rosenthal. The sooner we get started...

SIMON

The sooner what? I won't be healed any faster. You just want to finish up with me. Probably got a hot date or something.

The three look at each other with slight eye rolls.

LESLIE

Let's go over the procedure just one more time.

SIMON

We've been over it. I know it forward and backward. You put a mask on me. That knocks me out. While out, you give me a shot, that prepares me for the cryogenic chamber. Once that's done...

HARVEY

...once that's done, we put you in a secure chamber, where you will be safe. You will rest comfortably until such time as medical science figures out how to cure you. Once that happens, you will be revived, healed and you can go on with your life.

SIMON

I just wonder what kind of a life it will be.

CAROL

Why do you say that?

SIMON

What if I'm asleep for a hundred years. Maybe hundreds of years.

(MORE)

SIMON (CONT'D)

What kind of world will I find?
Everyone I know will be gone. And
I'm not all that good with
technology to begin with. I can't
work my cell phone. How will I be
able to work whatever gadgets we
will have by then?

CAROL

I'm sure it won't be that bad Mr.
Rosenthal.

LESLIE

I agree. It probably won't even be
that long. We are actually pretty
close to a cure for your cancer. We
just need a bit more time.
Unfortunately, more time than you
have. So you take a nap, give us
three years, maybe five, and you're
all set. Things will have changed,
but not that much. This is just a
trick to give you enough time until
we can help you.

SIMON

All I know is that I have the right
to live. Right? Whatever it takes.
That what our species is all about,
isn't it? We scratch and kick and
bite to stay alive. Well, that's
what I am doing. Alright, let's get
this over with.

He settles onto the table, and Carol puts a mask over his
face.

CAROL

Start counting backwards from one
hundred.

SIMON

One hundred... ninety-nine...
ninety eight... ninety seven...

And he drifts off.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN

INT. MEDICAL FACILITY - DAY

The room is similar to before, but things have changed. It seems a bit shabbier, less bright, somehow older.

Simon is laying on a table in the middle of the room, alone. He is unconscious. A man, DR. PETER SLANE walks in. He is white, middle twenties, stocky.

PETER
Alright, Mr...

He looks at a clipboard.

PETER (CONT'D)
Rosenthal. Let's bring you back to
the world of the living.

He injects something into his arm, and Simon starts to recover.

SIMON
(groggy)
...ninety-six...

His voice trails off.

PETER
Mr. Rosenthal? Can you hear me?

Simon opens his eyes, blinks and tries to focus.

SIMON
Who... who are you?

PETER
Dr. Peter Slane, at your service.
How is everything feeling?

SIMON
Feeling? OK I guess. A bit out of
it I guess.

PETER
That's normal. You will feel more
normal quickly. At least you woke
up.

SIMON
What?

PETER

You woke up. A lot of the others didn't. This process didn't work that well it would seem.

SIMON

But I'm OK?

PETER

Yep. Or you will be. The shot I gave you will also cure your cancer. Effectively, you are good as new.

Simon grows stronger, but is still recovering.

SIMON

The cancer is...

PETER

Gone. It's a pretty easy one for us to cure.

SIMON

How long... what year...?

PETER

You've been out almost one hundred years.

SIMON

One hundred years?

PETER

Yep. It's a shame really. The cure you needed was discovered a long time ago actually. But with the war and all...

SIMON

War?

PETER

Yeah, bad one. Set everything back quite a bit. Luckily this facility had alternative power and backup. This whole area has had to be rebuilt. Not that you noticed. You slept through the whole thing, didn't you?

SIMON

I guess so.

PETER

Well, you were lucky, let me tell you. Radiation everywhere. Cancers rampant. Set society back I don't know how far. But we are getting back on our feet. It will be OK.

SIMON

Wow! I never thought about that scenario.

PETER

Actually, you are one of the lucky ones, in a manner of speaking.

Peter goes over to a small table and takes a syringe, but tries to not be obvious as he returns.

SIMON

Lucky? How?

PETER

Well, you survived it all unscathed. You have pristine organs. You are worth a lot of money on the black market.

SIMON

What black market?

PETER

For clean organs. People need a lot of transplants, but there aren't very many people with clean organs to use for transplants. You are one of the few.

Simon gets a look of terror in his eyes, and suddenly realized that his hands are strapped to the table.

PETER (CONT'D)

I myself, need a new heart. That's why I was so excited when I found you. You will solve a lot of my problems. First you fix me. Then I use the rest to make some money. Your liver, your kidneys, your eyes. Worth a lot on the black market.

Simon starts to thrash.

SIMON

You can't. You can't do this to me.

PETER

Oh, but I can. And I will.

SIMON

You have no right.

PETER

No right? I have no right to try to stay alive? I have every right. Man has always done whatever they need to survive. We scratch and kick and bite to stay alive. That's all I'm doing.

He shows the syringe.

PETER (CONT'D)

Now, with no further ado, I need to get your prepped so I can get healthy. By the way, I want you to know that I really appreciate this.

He injects Simon.

PETER (CONT'D)

You can count backwards if you want. Or not. Really doesn't matter.

Simon starts to pass out. The last thing he sees is Peter standing over him, with a surgical mask, and a scalpel.

FADE OUT.

THE END