

CHAPTER ONE

KIT GREEN COULD HARDLY WAIT TO TALK TO HIS MOTHER. HE HAD HAD A FEELING OF DÉJÀ VU AFTER HIS HISTORY LESSON AND FELT UNCOMFORTABLE WITH THE EXPERIENCE. This was quite unusual for the 14 year-old hardy teenager. Kit believed he was impervious to all manner of things. However, today was different. Today, Kit's history teacher Miss Isles, walked the class through what life was like on the streets of London in the 1820s. This included clothes people wore; the gas lights used to brighten street corners, foods and illnesses. Kit sat transfixed. He had lived all this and knew it backwards. The smells of old London wafted into Kit's subconscious. He started to drift off.

'Kit! Are you okay,' Miss Isles asked.

'Sorry Miss. I'm back now,' Kit said.

'Good. Now stay with us.'

The history lesson was the last lecture period of the day. Kit felt really funny about the lecture. A number of times he wanted to jump into Miss Isle's descriptions of things and explain how they affected ordinary Londoners of the period. How did he know? This was the 21st century not the early 19th. When the school chimes rang to signal the end of the period, Kit stayed behind. He struck up a conversation with Miss Isles.

'Miss, do you really believe we've improved that much since the days of Hazlitt or Thomas Hardy?'

'Kit, you tell me. You heard all the things I outlined today about life in the 1820s. Much difference to today?'

'Yeah in a lot of ways. However, people really haven't changed that much have they? We still believe in the same sorts of things. All we have done is updated our clothes and available technology.'

'Yes. You seem very passionate about the subject.'

‘Miss, I felt today from the descriptions, that I had lived around the time of Hazlitt and the French Revolution that you taught us earlier. I had the feeling I could almost name the streets of central London of the time.’

The history teacher was stunned and studied her young charge. ‘Kit there has been any number of TV series depicting life in the 1800s. Maybe your mind was attracted to one of these and today’s lesson reinforced what you saw.’

‘You’re right Miss. That’s it, thanks,’ Kit lied. His mind was like a steel trap. He had a pretty good memory and did not remember any similar TV series. No. He had actually lived in London in the early 1800s. Now was not the time to argue with his teacher. Kit needed something more to base his claims on. He looked at his watch, made his excuses and ran to the bus stop. Time was short if he was going to catch the early bus. Thirty minutes later Kit walked through the front door of his home.

Leah had cut up some fruit and placed it in the fridge ready for Kit. Her son loved eating cool fruit and chatting to her about his day. The front door slammed as Kit made his way into the kitchen.

‘Hi mum.’

‘Hi Kit. Have a good day?’

‘Yeah, but you won’t believe what happened,’ Kit said in an excited tone.

Leah sat on a stool at the breakfast bar. She knew when Kit was excited about something he became quite passionate about it. Today seemed no different. She saw the expression on Kit’s face when he came into the house. The teenager’s face was lit up, his eyes widened and he was expressive with his hands.

‘She took us through a typical day in London in the early 1800s, but I could have taught the class myself about what it was like.’

‘Whoa, big guy! Who did what and when?’

‘Yeah, sorry. In history, Miss Isles took us through a typical day in London in the 1790s. I felt I had already really been there and could have told the class more about life in the homes and factories of the period than she could.’

‘Kit, you were born at the end of the 20th Century – not the 19th. How could you have had more intimate knowledge of the times than your teacher?’

‘Well, that’s the rub. I don’t know. When Miss Isles got down into the nitty gritty of life in London I started having all these images hit my brain, like real memories. I felt the cold, smelt the coal dust, saw the pale looking people walk the dirt roads or cobbled pavements as they went about their business. I heard the carriages and the clip clop of horses. I was there.’

‘Wow! You have a great imagination!’

Kit studied his mother’s face. She was taking the same line as Miss Isles. ‘Mum, I don’t know how I have this knowledge. I just feel I was there. Ever since my pool accident I have had this build-up of knowledge of life in England. I’ve got no idea why. But at least, if I have to write any essays on the period I’ll be okay. I can easily flood the pages with images as if I was standing looking out of my window and observing life as it was ... is ... whatever.’

‘The problem with that will be substantiating what you are writing about. You will need to have some credible source the examiners and teachers know about and use them to tell the story.’

‘You mean like having third party endorsement or something?’

‘Yes.’

Kit picked up a piece of fruit and started eating it. He thought about what his mother just said. She was right. Who was going to believe his feelings, no matter what Kit thought or remembered?

Leah discussed the rest of the school day with Kit before he finished his fruit and got up to leave.

‘What about your plate?’

‘Sorry, I’ll put it in the dishwasher.’

Kit went to his bedroom to change out of his school uniform and start his homework. Like any other teenager, Kit hated homework but knew he had to do it to score some good grades and maybe a good job at the end. His room was messy and needed a good tidy up. When Kit took off his clothes to change he would leave them lying around on the floor rather than in the dirty washing hamper and the usual parent-teenager arguments would ensue to clean his room.

This was not the first time Kit had had a flashback type event to the 19th Century. The teenager had been asleep after a routine day of holidays. Daniel and Leah were asleep in bed and had their bedroom door open. A change of light conditions in her bedroom and the outside hallway walls aroused her from her sleep. She saw an eerie light moving along the hallway and nudged Daniel awake. The couple sat up and watched as Kit slowly walked past their bedroom holding a lit candle on a saucer in front of him. It was a scene straight out of Dickens. Kit walked to the kitchen, placed the saucer on the breakfast bar and opened the fridge to get a drink of cold water. He drank from the bottle and then made his way back to his bedroom with Daniel still watching him. The lad blew out the candle and snuggled up in his bed and went back to sleep. When Daniel asked Kit about the incident in the morning, the teenager had no knowledge of the event. He couldn’t explain why he had a candle in his room or why he didn’t use the torch on his bedside table. What was so strange for both Daniel and Leah was the automatic response of Kit to light a candle to use as a light rather than pick up a torch. Daniel joked to Leah they should buy their son a nightcap and long night dress instead of pyjamas, that way he’d be right at home. Kit’s experience at school was another episode the family could not explain.

The first episode took place within a couple of hours after Kit was operated on after his accident. The teenager had been moved to the recovery ward from the operating theatre while he recovered from the effects of the anaesthetic. The surgeon, Dr Liam Curry, had gone to check on his patient. Kit had slowly come round and was awake when Dr Curry visited him.

‘Kit, I’m Dr Curry. How are you feeling?’

Kit studied the doctor’s face and turned away from looking at him.

‘What’s up mate? Are you feeling nauseous or light headed? This is normal after what you’ve been through.’

Kit took a moment to gather his thoughts and then looked directly at his surgeon. ‘You gave up on me. Why?’

Dr Curry was shocked. He knew Kit had gone from the operating theatre straight to the recovery room while unconscious. He was not prepared for Kit’s questioning.

‘Kit, are you okay? No one gave up on you. You’ve had an accident and we had to operate to take the pressure off your brain. You’ll be fine.’

‘You gave up on me during the operation and were about to send me to the morgue!’ Kit looked at Dr Curry as the surgeon’s eyes widened and his mouth fell open. ‘The nurse kept saying you should keep trying to revive me with the paddles. You gave up on me. I saw you ready to walk away.’

‘Kit, what the hell are you talking about?’

‘Dr Curry, I saw the whole operation you performed on me. I don’t know how it happened, but I was floating above the operating table. When my heart stopped beating you tried a couple of times to revive me and then gave up. You seemed to be in a hurry to go somewhere.’ Tears started seeping from Kit’s eyes as he watched Dr Curry. The surgeon had stood rooted to the spot as Kit questioned him and told him of his near death experience. The lad was becoming emotional. Dr Curry walked to the side of Kit’s bed and put a hand on the youth’s shoulder. Dr Curry had only experienced one other patient who had had an out of body experience during one of his operations.

‘Kit, what you experienced is extraordinary. For whatever reason you were given a special time that most of us will never know. What you saw was a routine operation. When your heart stopped I tried a number of times to re-start it. When there was no response I thought I had lost you.’

‘The nurse near my head kept telling you to keep trying to save me but you wanted to give up. Why didn’t you want to keep trying?’

‘Kit, I thought your body had given up. Your vital signs had ceased functioning and I believed you had died. What else did you see?’

‘I saw and heard you arguing with the nurses. I tried telling you I was alive but no one could hear me.’

‘Your heart had stopped and your brain had started shutting down. Kit you were dead!’

‘I wasn’t. I was watching you from above the table and yelling at you ...’

Dr Curry squeezed Kit’s shoulder and then ran his hand down to the lad’s hand and held it. ‘I really believed you had died. Whatever happened to you that enabled you to see and hear what was happening from above the table is very special. You are a very lucky teenager ...’

Kit tried to come to grips with what his surgeon was saying and also what he remembered about the operation and out of body experience. It was not easy as he was having problems with the effects of coming out of the operation too.

‘Try to have a sleep and I’ll talk to you later when you’re moved to the ward.’

Dr Curry gripped Kit’s hand and smiled. A nurse who followed Dr Curry on his rounds had stood in the doorway to the ward and wiped tears from her eyes as she realised what the Kit had been through. A miracle had happened and the boy had been given a second chance at life. A new beginning – a nascent - had started for the boy.

Kit gripped the doctor’s hand and nodded. He closed his eyes and let his body take over. He was tired and he had so much to think about – later. Now, he just needed sleep. He knew he would talk with the doctor again. Dr Curry stopped doing his rounds and headed for the staff room and made himself a cup of tea. Usually his patients are asleep before he walked into the operating theatre. He only had to conduct his operations and then do his rounds. A regular routine for the doctor. Kit had thrown a spanner in the works for him. The boy not only accurately described what took place while he was under the knife and unconscious, but what was also being said. Dr Curry finished his tea and tried to make sense of what had just happened with Kit. He then made his way to the visitor’s area and sought the teenager’s parents to tell them of their son’s experience so they were prepared. Daniel and Leah were as stunned as Dr Curry but were quite ready to support their son. After all, it’s not every day

someone in the family floats around an operating theatre while being operated on and sees and hears what's happening while outside of their body!

After a few more hours of sleep Kit slowly woke up to find his parents sitting either side of his bed and his mother holding his right hand. He broke into a smile as his eyes engaged each of his parents. His smile was returned quickly as his parents realised their son was okay. The bandage around his head was the real give away and would stay on for a little while.

'How are you feeling now son,' Daniel asked as he leant towards Kit.

'Okay, I think. I have a headache but I'm okay,' the teenager said.

'We thought we had lost you,' Leah said as she kissed Kit on his forehead. 'You certainly gave us a fright.'

'Gave you a fright?' Kit said and then thought of what he wanted to say about his out of body experience and his trip to heaven. 'I'm okay. I've been in good hands.' Kit didn't want to engage his parents now about his trip to heaven or wherever he was taken and then sent back.

Within a week of Kit being discharged from hospital he was back to his normal routine including school. He made his way home on the bus, changed into a pair of shorts and T-shirt and settled down at his desk to review his homework as a test was coming up. He stared at his books and drifted off in his mind. Scenes of old England filled his senses. The tick tock of his wall clock turned into the clip clop of horses pulling carriages along the mews. Photos of Kit and his family melted into windows of a small bedroom in 18th Century London with images of children in peculiar clothes and their parents looking up as Kit was looking down. Two young boys were wearing three-quarter pants with coat tails; funny looking boots and no socks, small caps and fingerless gloves. The mother had a shawl wrapped around her shoulders, a long sleeved dress that went all the way down to her shoes and carried a small football shaped handbag. The father had a very old top hat that was frayed, crumpled and well worn. Like his sons, the father had a top coat with tails and cut away waist line. His trousers went over his shoes but he also wore fingerless gloves. The man began pointing up to the window. Kit pulled back from the window image and shook his head. This was not happening. The images were not real. The teenager's bedroom came quickly back into view.

‘Phew. I’m back,’ Kit said as he quickly took in his room. His books were still open and his pen resting in his hand. Kit was becoming concerned as the vision he just had was not a one-off. Since his pool accident, Kit had experienced several visions of old England along with scenes of ordinary day to day living. The visions were so strong Kit felt he could even smell the streetscapes; the sooty air from the coal fires and rain drenched roads. At times, Kit would see the 19th Century gas lighter walking to the glass-topped poles along the street to light the various gas lights and so illuminate the road. He could even hear horse-drawn carriages as they made their way along the old wooden and stone cobbled streets.

There were two other things that had happened to Kit since his operation. The first was his ability to see colourful strong lights emanating from people. He learnt these were people’s auras and could be used as a roadmap to how people were feeling. The second was that sometimes when he touched people he felt how they felt. It was like opening the door into the other person’s soul and feeling their fears, loves, aspirations and anger.

Kit worried about these images and visions and was sure he was starting to develop some sort of mental condition. His real issue was trying to stop them.