

Cognitive - Chapter 1

Ten minutes ago, I woke to the sound of screaming. And also Yo-Yo Ma. Not sequentially or in an order that made sense, but overlapping and confusing. But, truthfully, everything was confusing.

My life started ten minutes ago. I'm sure it probably biologically started further back, but this ten minutes is what I know.

I'm going to guess eleven minutes, now.

They say your life flashes before your eyes when you are about to die. If that's the case, I've been reliving every minute as it happens because this is it.

The screams came from the people falling over the side of the railing on the high rise I'm on the roof of. Some roof-top bar or club, from the looks of it. Not that I'm sure how I know that or if I come to these a lot.

The Yo-Yo Ma, which is another I don't know how I know, was coming through the speakers in the small canopy I was laying under.

Probably should have led with that, but I guess I wanted you to share along with the crazy ride I've been a part of for the entire time I've known. I'm laying, sort of propped on my left-side, with my hand covering what could only be described as a "big-gushing wound o' death." I call it that, because no matter what you may remember or know, when you see lots of blood seep out between your fingers and pool under you, you sorta know this is the big one. Like you skipped those other four stages of grief and jumped right to acceptance. How did I know that about stages of grief?

Anyway, I'm lying here with the aforementioned wound when I woke up. No idea what in the hell was going on or where I was. Just screams and Yo-Yo Ma. Odd juxtaposition of sounds, I'll grant you.

I looked around and saw people dropping off the side of the railing across from me. Through the glass wall on the lower half of the railing I could see their faces. One even looked right at me as her grip must have given out. She jumped right to the end of the grief spectrum, too. Never forget her eyes changing from sheer panic, to however you can describe acceptance of death in someone's eyes. Go ahead, I'll wait. It's tough, I don't think I could do it. Before or after I woke up.

Those who fell were just trying to survive what I guess to be an ambush. No, wait, that's wrong. An ambush is when they lie in wait for you and then spring in. Plus, I would have had to have been surprised to see them jumping out, which since I can't remember, seems unlikely. This would probably be better described as an attack. Yeah, that might seem lazy as a word, but it is true. These guys in some kind of sci-fi, next-level strange body armor were just firing at people with their rifles.

Shooting and shooting.

No idea when they started, but I'm willing to take a leap of a guess and assume it was before I lay here with the "big-gushing wound o' death." I could hear the screams, and Yo-Yo Ma over the sound of the guns. They made this odd kind of popping sound with a little blue-flame that popped out of the barrel with each shot. Really odd, but seemingly effective.

Now as I wonder how long I can still think with all this blood pouring out of me, I kinda want to figure out which of us is the bad guy. I mean, in my just awoken state,

with no memory of anything else, I could assume that the guys in the armor shooting at what look like people just out for a good time, could be construed as the bad guys. But, what if they are the authorities and I'm with a bunch of organized crime folks, or some sort of secret cabal hell-bent on governmental domination? It could happen. It's been a short life, getting shorter, so I can make it anything I want.

It's gotta be over fifteen minutes of life now. I wonder where the guy who were shooting at us went. They left not long after I woke up. Apparently, they didn't notice me still alive because the others around me are certainly dead. It is a lot quieter up here now. Whatever they did while up here shut off the music to the speakers, too. Now, it is just quiet with a little wind, and the far-off sound of police sirens coming from the other side of the railing. I wonder how far down that is. I also kind of wonder where in the hell I am.

Wait, what is this? There is something buzzing in my pocket. Thankfully, it is on the side opposite the wound because I don't think moving that hand to feel around in a pocket would be a smart idea.

What is this...oh, it's my phone. My phone. I recognize it as mine. That's got to be good, right? Some part of me still remembers something about me. Oh, it's a text message.

-Miriam, don't panic. We received your call and are en route. ETA: 90 seconds.-

This is my phone, I recognize it, so I must be Miriam....right? I called someone? Who would I call? Why am I asking myself that, I have no idea who, but it makes sense that I would have a phone that would be used to call people. That's kinda their purpose. Well, that and playing Angry Birds. Oooo, I remembered something else!

Ninety seconds? That should mean it would be about now, right?

What's that noise? Is that...Is that...a helicopter? They are coming in from the distance, but look like they are coming fast. Is that who I'm waiting for?

"Miriam, snap out of it! We gotta go!"

"What...? Who said that?"

Wait, who's this guy? Where did he come from? They come from; there are three of them.

"I did. Stop screwing around and come on!"

"Um, buddy, in case you didn't see it, I've sort of got a lot of blood leaving my body!"

They are coming closer. I can see they aren't wearing what the first guys were wearing. Good sign?

"Shit...Ok...Hold still. Let me get something on that."

They seem to be interested in my welfare. Another good sign, I'd guess.

"Who are you?"

"We don't have time for a rousing pep-speech, Miriam, we can play the 'who's the best' game, later."

"I'm not playing anything. I don't know you. I woke up here about twenty minutes ago and have no idea what I'm doing here or anything before I woke up."

Why is he staring at me like that? Ok, I may be a 'newborn' in this world at the moment, but I can tell when a look goes around among people who are doubting if you are sane or not.

"Listen, buddy, I appreciate the care to keep my blood inside of me, but I really am at a loss here. Could you help me out as to why I might be laying here bleeding, with a lot of other people who are dead around me and on the other side of that railing."

"Miriam, if you aren't playing, we are screwed. You were the one who knew how to get inside their place. We don't. Without you, we are dead, too."

I kinda want to go back to sleep and keep listening to You-Yo Ma.

"Dale, that chopper is going to be on top of us in just a few seconds. We gotta go, man."

"Ok. Miriam? I need you to remember, so you gotta come with us, now."

Damn, he is stronger than he looks. He picked me up like I weighed nothing.

Guess my new life is with these three people. Wonder what the next half-hour will bring.