

## PROLOGUE

"Please. Please don't . . ." The words were drowned in gasping sobs. "Please don't leave me! Please stay. A little while longer, then I promise I'll let you go." She ran to him, tears streaming down her face.

His heart broke. She was but a child, smaller than most. He wanted always to protect her. Appearances revealed that the world would swallow her whole. So petite, so innocent, so pure. It is not how she'd come. The beat of his heart picked up. He squeezed her tighter in recalled memory of how he'd found her. Seconds away from fallen. Now, as he lifted her chin and stared into her tear-glittering ocean eyes, he knew beyond a doubt she'd been cleansed, purified, wiped clean. As untainted as a child first born into the world. Oblivious. And this particular child had been born with the soul of an angel, a heart full of gold . . . and a mission.

It is not the first time she'd been reborn, nor the fifth. The world was getting worse and they were simply outnumbered. Too many fell – too many fallen. The most difficult thing to endure was not giving up – nor giving in.

She had to go back. They both did, "There, there. It's not so bad. It won't be long. A mere second in eternity."

"But what if I lose my way? What if I can't find my way back? When will I see you? What if you forget?" she said, almost hysterically, her questions rapid-fire.

He heard the low rumbling in the distance, growing louder, coming closer. The light was dimming, gradually it seemed with eyes open, but rapidly with a blink. He did not answer her as he did not have the answers. "We must go now. It's time," he urged, pulling on her fragile hand. "Now. We must go now!" he said more urgently, seeing beyond her, seeing what she could not. She crossed her arms and set her face stubbornly. "Not until you tell me your name."

The ground shook beneath him. "Please, little one, we must go now!" She couldn't see the wrong, the changes around her. She'd been here too long. So good

and pure was she in soul that she was completely oblivious to the crumbling of their world.

"I won't move an inch until you tell me your name so I may find you again." And there she plunked down right on her behind while behind her everything was being cast into Nothingness. If the Nothingness reached them, they'd be lost.

"I demand you get up and move, little one."

"I will not lose you. I will not! Tell me your name?" And if her body was small and unremarkable in strength for their being none, her voice rose over falling mountains, shattering ground, and reverberated throughout the Nothingness.

"You know we do not speak names, little one. Names will bring about the curse."

"Blah the curse. I don't care. I will take any curse if it means I will find you again."

"You know nothing! You are a child!"

"I may be a child, but my power is my love and love conquers all. Even the power which is yours. I will die without my love, and if I cannot find you again, I will perish. Do you hear me? I will lose!" Tears pricked his lids. How could he have, moments ago, believed her weak and too pure to survive? All the battles he'd fought and won . . .

"My power is duty. I will not defy our Father by telling you my name."

"Love is more powerful than duty. Succumb to me!"

"I will not! Duty is more powerful than love. I will not defy Him as you defy me. You'll be the ruin of both of us, but at least I'm being true to my duty," he said firmly, marking the sign of the cross over his heart.

Her eyes luminescent suddenly, almost blinding. He shielded his face as she lifted her eyes to him. In that moment, she was not a little girl. She was all wisdom, all knowing. The pain he thought she oblivious too showed fierce and

deep in the huge globe of her eyes. "And I'm being true to my heart," she whispered.

Whereas he thought her so innocently unaware to the disappearance of their world, she turned to the Nothingness, her face that of an aged woman, beautiful and tragic. She sobbed deeply once, allowing her shoulders to fall with the burden of the knowing that she carried. Sadly, she knew what she had to do.

"Little one?"

"If my love cannot overpower your duty, nor your duty my love . . ." Then she lifted her brilliant face, a single tear glimmering like crystal on her cheek, and spread her arms. "In the name of love, my name is Aliyah Destiny Demonica!" And she jumped.

"No!" he howled as he dove for her, but They had already snatched her away into Nothingness, giving them the power in the knowing of her name, as it echoed throughout infinite miles of the emptiness. Aliyah. He crouched on his knees, his torment great. He faced the light, the Darkness at his back. "Lord, forgive me. I have failed you." He cried.

As quickly as he'd been humbled, he stood and nodded his head – the firm features of his face set in the knowing of his duty. He stared out into the beautiful gardens, the earth, the animals, and all that was divine and plentiful. The lighted path that would have brought them to their final destination. And he turned his back.

His duty was to protect her. He knew that now. And so he stepped into the Nothingness, of the purest of black and the starkest of silence, and walked blindly away from the light, knowing and feeling deeply that he'd never return in the absence of her. As much as the world required his duty, so too did the world require her love. They'd never been meant to go against each other, rather, to unite harmoniously to create synchrony amidst the All and the Nothing. He had something she did not. He possessed the power of her name. She'd crossed the Forbidden, but only in that crossing did she set the path. Her name was Aliyah. Her power was love, and his duty. It is what kept them alive. One could perceive

that she'd been consumed by the Nothingness, but it only takes one to disperse of none, just as one microscopic mass will demolish the empty.

And now there were two.

## CHAPTER 1

### SIGNIFICANCE IN THE AWARE

*I've always wondered if perhaps I speak a different language, as though my dialect on the sound waves directed to another's ears are somehow altered during their transport.*

*So much the words I say go misunderstood.*

*Or perhaps like the animal that can hear sounds and pitches our own ears cannot, my spoken voice cannot be heard but by a select few.*

*So much the words I speak go unheard.*

*I've always wondered if perhaps my frame is not solid, or rather my skin not opaque, most part of me translucent, invisible to those common eyes, as though there is a part of me ghost or spirit and another visible and solidly human.*

*So much the good of me goes unnoticed.*

*We all have a field that surrounds us, an aura of energy of sorts, and these fields are intuitive to the fields of others. I've always wondered if perhaps there are others dominating my space, an attraction of dark entities with faces and bodies pressed to my globe, trying to get in to blacken my white spirit.*

*So much the good that surrounds me goes unfelt.*

*Am I surrounded by mirrors that distort my features so that those things I express are deformed and disabled as those reactions typical to each expression are not provided to me in kind to what I display and depict.*

*So much of my expressions are misinterpreted.*

*These are the questions I have always asked of myself as I walk my path alone.*

Lydia kicked her feet against the bed, rhythmically flexing her calves to ease the restlessness. She ignored the tingly-crawlies she felt all over her body, and refused to change positions, no matter how much her body was telling her to. *Tick-tock, tick-tock* The tick she didn't mind so much. It was the tock that bothered her, to her a formidable sound that marked the passage of time; time

that should have been spent sleeping. She measured her breathing to inhale at the tick and exhale at the tock.

“Focus on the paralysis of your body, Lydia,” her sleep Doctor had told her. “Remember my voice, the gentle lulls up and down like the gentle tides of the ocean, pulling you further and further from the shore. Embrace the comfortable tingling starting at your toes, and as the tingling moves toward your calves, your toes become numb, and as the warm, fuzzy tingling moves toward your knees, your calves become numb, upward to your thighs and to the very tip of your fingers and the top of your head.”

COO COO! COO COO! She nearly jumped out of her skin. 2 am. She’d been laying there for four hours.

“No, Lydia, don’t get rid of your Cuckoo clock. If you do, you will keep opening your eyes to look at the time, and will come full into consciousness again. You will be further exacerbated with the anxiety of not knowing what time it is,” she mocked the specialist angrily as she got up to get a drink of water. “Drink water only, sip it slowly, half a glass so you won’t be interrupted with bathroom breaks in the middle of the night. No tea, no coffee, no soda, and *no more alcohol!* Self-medicating is only a temporary fix to your sleep problems, it doesn’t create restful sleep, which will only prolong and make-worse your sleep issues. WELL, AT LEAST IT ALLOWS ME TO *FALL ASLEEP!*” she yelled in frustration.

She turned the TV on to low-volume, a *Merlin* episode on Netflix, against the specialist’s advice, and began the processes all over again. She counted Mississippi’s backwards from 10, forward to 9, back again, while imagining herself stepping further and further back into the darkness.

‘Do not fear the dark. Darkness is your friend,’ she heard, perhaps from the TV. She kept strolling further back into the trenches of unconsciousness. As usual, ghastly images presented themselves in front of her and in her peripheral. Images that had previously frightened her and kept her constantly waking up. Images that she didn’t have to face when she’d been drinking in order to pass out. She saw dolls with crying eyes, angry, scary faces, bleeding porcelain masks.

*They can't hurt me. Not real, she told herself. Keep walking.* A purple pony with its neck broken. A ghost swinging from a beam, a rope around its neck. Her heart picked up in that old childhood fear that if a ghost knew you could see it, they'd follow you. *Creak, creak, creak*, it sounded. *Keep walking. Eyes straight forward. Don't look back!*

All of a sudden, the area opened up, and a vast array of colors permeated the darkest of darkness. Now enthralled, she kept moving forward, as it seemed only a few feet away. It was like looking out through a huge stone and glittering, blue emerald crown. There were 8 points, like the directions of a compass – North, Northeast, East, Southeast, South, Southwest, West, Northwest, all made of stone with little embedded blue emeralds, with the end of the point marked with a large blue emerald. The sun on the emerald tips provoked a whirlwind of colors across the immaculate sky that looked like a sunrise. Different from the earth's sunrise, it was marked with darker shades of oranges, blues, pinks, and purples. The sun was a deep orange, and appeared to be captured in a huge glass globe.

"Magnificent," she breathed. *Remember this when I'm awake so that I may draw it*, Lydia sent back to her conscious mind. She kept walking forward, wanting to see more than just the sky. Suddenly an eyeball covered up the entire view. It was large with perfect white surrounding the beautiful green iris, and black outlining the bottom and top lids. It looked almost as though she was being looked at through a telescope, and she was looking through the telescope at the opposite end. It blinked. She stared at the eye for quite a long time, memorizing the green, a green she'd never quite seen before. Perfection. She wondered what the eye saw of her? Did the eye looking at her see her blue, bloodshot, sleep-deprived eye?

*Hello*, she thought. *Who are you?*

The eye abruptly left, momentarily shedding into her view what she'd previously been admiring. She felt peace, surrender even. Then swiftly there was darkness and a roaring growl, "Go back!" The sudden cutting off of light left her completely blind and disoriented. She didn't want to go back. She didn't want to

go back to the dead eyes, the bleeding masks, the creaking, pendulum–swinging ghost. She didn't want to hear the Cuckoo clock alert her to 3 am or 4 am. She was sleeping and she was going to stay sleeping, dammit. So she pushed forward toward where the beautiful land had been, the air growing heavy and thick, until there came a point where she felt she couldn't breathe. Still, she pushed forward, her body growing heavier and laden until she was on her hands and knees, crawling.

“You must go back!” A different voice, a child's, full of alarm.

“No,” she tried crying out, but without breath she was without voice. She felt like she was squeezing herself through a narrow tunnel that was getting narrower with each movement forward. *Must . . . Not . . . Wake . . . Up.* She moved her hands further, and the ground was gone. She somersaulted forward, willing herself not to scream and be frightened. Everyone knows that the fear of the catapulting off a cliff in one's dreams always wakes one up before they hit the ground.

*I'm not going to die. That's just a myth,* she told herself, then willed herself to open her eyes a tenth of a second before careening into something white and fluffy. *Is this what my subconscious mind thinks of my new foam mattress?* She laid there, feeling as though she was cocooned in a cloud, staring up at the brilliant sky, feeling the warm caress of the globed deep–orange sun, and she sighed happily. Blessed sleep, finally, and she closed her eyes.

But then she felt a gentle jab to her side. “You're not supposed to be here. How did you get in?” The child's voice that had urged her to go back. She opened her eyes and this time saw a pair of those beautiful green eyes, connected to a flawless face that looked about 11 or 12 years old.

She sat up, “You! I saw you looking at me! Tell me, boy, what is this place?”

“You must leave now!” he said, pointing his finger at an impossibly small black tunnel that looked so off–putting in this beautiful world of colors.

She laughed lightly, not remembering when she'd last felt this good. “Why would I go back to that place of nightmares? I want to sleep here. I have a very

important meeting at work tomorrow that I can't miss, so please, just let me rest for a time and I'll be gone before you know it."

He stomped his foot, which on a cloud was as futile as stomping one's foot into a pile of fluffy snow. "You don't belong here. If They find out -." Suddenly, the winds picked up in a fury, alerting her to open her eyes again. She saw black and white figures circling in the air, and plunging down toward them, which was creating the mild tornado-effect. Six black and six white surrounded them in a circle, not quite touching the ground, rather floating a few inches above it. They should have scared her, but in this land of beauty, they didn't. Their figures were each uniquely different, as were their dark eyes that glittered as brilliantly as the blue emeralds.

"Hello," Lydia said, intent on not having her peaceful slumber disturbed. Her issues with insomnia weren't just the inability to fall asleep, but the inability to stay asleep, and the constant waking would then result in the inability to wake while her desperate body demanded the needed sleep.

"She's alive?" a white figure with piercing indigo eyes said in surprise.

"You! You let her in," a black scrawny figure with a deep voice and beaming, dark yellow eyes pointed at the boy.

"I - I swear I did not," the boy's voice pitched. "I was doing my rounds, as usual, and saw her headed in this direction, so I activated the switch. She shouldn't have been able to get through, but she did."

"He's lying! No living human can navigate here without direction and without being let in," a stouter black figure with grey eyes said. "There is only one possible conclusion. We never should have trusted a human boy. He let her in, which by the Bylaws means imprisonment."

"Check the switch. It's activated," his voice whined.

A tall white figure with dark pink eyes raised what could be attributed to a type of arm, stopping the black figures' movements toward them. "Check the switch," it commanded.

“See, I told you I activated it. I didn’t do anything wrong. I did my job just as instructed. I even told her to go back.”

“He could have activated the switch *after* he let her in.”

“Human.”

“Huh?” Lydia re-opened her dreaming eyes.

“How did you get in here?”

She yawned. “I just fell through into this dream wonderland. Best sleep I’ve had in a decade.”

“She couldn’t have just fallen through without it being open.”

“Yes, yes, I do agree that this requires an investigation and a consultation. In the meantime, we must follow the Bylaws,” the white-figure with the indigo eyes said.

“Wait. I’ll go with you without resistance,” the boy said. “But let her return. You heard her. She thinks she’s in dream wonderland, all just a dream. She won’t remember anything.”

“It’s a bit late for that, human, don’t you think? The pathway has now been inked into her subconscious, and she bypassed all the things meant to frighten her and turn her around. She will return, and next time, she may not be alone. Like you, boy, she can never go back. Human, you are to come with us. If you fight us, you will be restrained.”

“You’re actually a quite adorable demon with your orange squinty eyes,” Lydia smiled, lazily picking herself up, feeling as though she weighed lighter than the air itself. Well, almost, less she be floating or flying like them. “My Doctor was so right. He said that once I start confronting my fears, instead of running from them, then the feeling of fear would dissipate and I’d stop waking myself up full of panic and adrenaline.”

“Silence, human. I’d rather spend an eternity as I am than spend another minute in the idiotic human mind,” he/it mumbled.

“Looks like the woman’s freedom movement hasn’t reached dreamland. You’re all males. What kind of government is that? Every government needs a female

touch, less you wouldn't all be so grumbly. I don't need any more miserable males in my life. I've had enough of that, thank you very much, even if you are spirit-demons-whatever-you-are."

One of them snorted in irritation.

"Does anyone have the time?" she asked.

"The Otherland possesses all time and no time, encompassing and balancing precariously the past, present, future, and the nothingness," a white plump figure explained.

"Well the past, present, and future time for me is 8:00 precisely, or I will wind up with nothingness if I lose my job." Lydia chuckled at her own joke.

The boy's head was down, pointed at his sluggish feet.

"Cheer up, little man. You're too young to be so unhappy. You'll have plenty of adult years to have that," she scruffed his thick blonde hair. He did not lift his head, nor did he smile.

"This is where we leave you. Be prepared for the summons for the ceremony to conclude this matter," the white-figure with pink eyes said to the black-figures. Then they lifted off into the colorful sky.

Lydia waved. "Bye white things, it was nice to have met you." Another step-forward and she was assaulted by a complete change of scenery. If where she'd been had been in the daytime with a glowing sun and a beautiful sunrise, here it was night. No moon. Pitch black. The ground no longer soft and fluffy, but hard. Goosebumps instantly aroused on her skin from the chill. Shadows of blackness, hardly visible, flew in the air, like bats. "What the -?"

Lydia turned to where she'd just been and saw blackness for as far as the eye could see. "And to think that for one night, *one night*, I thought I might actually be able to go without a nightmare," she grumbled aloud. "Let me guess, they have night vision," she said to the boy, nearly tripping over him.

"They don't need their eyes to see," he said quietly. "And they're not white things. They're the Light and Dark Elders."

She noticed he was trembling, so she wrapped her arm around him. "It is cold here, isn't it?"

"It's because we have body-heat. They don't feel temperatures."

"So they're cold-hearted, eh?" she tried lightening the mood.

"You have no idea," he whispered.

"I'll protect ya. You just have to remember that when we're dreaming, nothing bad can really happen to us, no matter how much it may seem real."

"Step up," she heard a moment too late as she tripped on a step and plunged forward, cracking her chin and scraping her hands on the hard ground. It felt like stone.

"On the other hand, you still feel the pain like it's real in a dream. Ow! Thanks for the advance notice, Dark one. I'm sure you did that on purpose." And she did hear him lowly chuckle.

"We've got two new prisoners, both humans. One's been with us a long time. The other just showed up. They're to be held until the ceremony trial determines their fate."

Their eyes were the only thing that could be seen in the darkness. She heard the boy whimper, so she searched for his hand. "Don't be afraid. Nightmares feed off of our fears," Lydia reassured. They were maneuvered forward and then the black, or dark whatever were gone, and they were left in silence. Lydia walked around blindly, still holding his hand, tripped on something and caught herself last moment.

"Boy, I could really use a flashlight or something." Suddenly light illuminated the blackness from the flashlight that appeared in her hand. "Cool."

"Huh-how did you do that? Humans don't have magic."

"Yes! A bed and a blanket. Finally! It's not magic, silly. In the dream world, if you focus it just enough, you can control certain things, and get your conscious mind to manipulate the sub-conscious mind into providing something that you need or want. Come," she patted the stone-hard bed. "Lay with me. We'll cover our heads up with the blanket like a tent and tell stories until we wake up."

The boy began to sob uncontrollably. "You don't get it! You can't – guh-go back. Thu- that's why they put you here, so you can nuh-never go back, like – like me. We're stuck here for all eternity."

"Oh, you poor, frightened boy. I know our dreams, and especially our nightmares, can feel like an eternity when it's really no more than a few minutes of passing time. I was really hoping for a full night's rest, but I can't have you sitting here, crying, and being so frightened. We can leave here anytime we want."

"Huh-how? We're locked in a stone cell. Wall-to-wall, ceiling-to-floor stone that's a foot thick."

"Perhaps that is what you see, as that's your imagination. You know what I see?" She swooped the flashlight around the room. "A completely open area. Freedom. To come and go as we please."

"Are you mad? We're in a big stone chamber. How can you not see that?"

"Watch. Tell me where you think the wall is, and I'll walk right through it." She began walking.

"A foot in front of you," he said.

She kept walking.

"Holy cow, you just walked through the wall. How?"

She returned to him. "Because there is no wall. It's just a trick of the imagination. Now, you just watched me walk through it. You believe that there isn't really a wall, and we'll get out of here together, back to the wonder part of dreamland."

He trustingly took her hand, but there came a moment when she heard him cry out, he released her hand, and there was a tearful thud.

"What happened?"

"I ran into the wall I keep telling you is there," he said angrily, holding his bleeding nose. She took a part of the blanket and held it to his nose.

"Hmm, I wonder if you're claustrophobic in the real world, which is why your nightmare is being imprisoned by stone walls. That's something like what my

sleep specialist would say. You need to face your fears. It's the only way to get rid of them. In the meantime, you'll just have to wait it out, lay down, close your eyes, and wait for the nightmare to pass."

Suddenly, she heard other thuds and cries of pain all around them. "And apparently you're not the only one with the fear of enclosed spaces," she chuckled.

He grabbed her hand in both of his and said, "You must go back before they do their rounds and find out what you can do." His beautiful, green eyes glowed brighter in his tears. "Promise you won't ever come back here."

"Of course I'll come back. We're friends now. We can have all the adventures you want."

"Please listen to me!" he pleaded. "I can never leave here, but you – you can go back, but you must do it before they catch you. There's another tunnel. It is white. It is the only light you'll see in this realm. Go back to your world. Go to your meeting. Don't worry about me."

"I'll come back for you. I promise," she said, kissing him on the forehead. "Here, perhaps this will make you less afraid." She presented him with a stuffed brown dog with fluffy ears. He looked at her with awe. "I'll be back."

She ran through the darkness, following the path she'd taken on the way in. Being blind seemed no longer to phase her as she navigated with her internal-compass.

Long after she left, the boy curled up with the first stuffed animal he could ever remember having, and cried. Knowing . . . Once she returned to her world, she wouldn't remember anything, and if there was ever a chance of him leaving Otherland, it was with the girl who looked like a warrior-princess, who did magic and walked through stone walls, and whose kiss warmed his heart more than anything he'd ever known.

## CHAPTER 2

Something slammed into Lydia's chest and she saw red. Surrounded, without sight, she flared her arms and fought the things she could not see. "Let go of me. Let go of me. Let go of me!" Suddenly she was without breath, without voice, pinned, paralyzed. Only her head was allowed to scream, but who would hear her?

"Don't even bother coming into work today, because you're fired, effective immediately."

Fired, fired, fired, the familiar voice echoed. Whose voice?

"LET ME GO!" She shot up in bed, hearing the echo of a scream, heart pounding, freezing, but covered in sweat. Her phone began ringing. Her throat was parched. Dizzily, she made her way to the phone. "Hello," her voice croaked.

"I'm not puttin' my ass on the line for you no more, Lydia. Now my job on the line."

"Cherise?"

"You just woke up, didn't you?"

"I don't even feel like I slept. What ... what time is it?" she rubbed her bleary eyes.

"Ain't nothin' I can do for you now, Lydia. You missed the mandatory meeting, and I was left looking like an a-hole in front of my superior, cuz I couldn't vouch for your absence."

"Please," Lydia sobbed. "I've been seeing a sleep specialist. It takes time."

“Once a month, I covered for you, but this the fifth time dis month.” Cherise sighed, and said more quietly, “I’m havin’ to fire you, effective immediately, I’m sorry.”

“It gets worse before it gets better. How do you think I’m paying for my treatment? I need that insurance.”

“I care about you, Lydia. I understand what you going through . . . to an extent. *They* don’t, and *they* happen to be my boss. I’ll drop your last paycheck off to ya. We’ll go out to eat or somethin’, my treat. I don’t want this to hurt our friendship, but, I got kids. I can’t afford to lose this job.”

“And I can?” Lydia said in exasperation.

“I gotta get back. I’ll – uh – I’ll check up on you in a few days.”

“Cherise,” Lydia pleaded, but the line was already disconnected.

Lydia chucked the phone across the room a second prior to realizing she couldn’t afford to break her phone. Then she scoured her small efficiency for her glasses.

*Cause God forbid I actually put them in the same place every night, she thought.* She was near legally-blind without corrective lenses, which was the biggest reason for why the specialist told her she needed to keep her Cuckoo clock. She didn’t know how she’d come to be that way, near-legally blind, that is, or if she’d been born that way. Just like she could never remember living anywhere else other than this little apartment.

Cheap, comfortable, everything literally only a short walk away. Her bedroom was the living room, and the dining room, and then there was a small bathroom attached to the efficiency kitchen. There was a hatchback door on the floor that led to the stairs, which led to the driveway. She essentially lived in the attic, but for as long as she had lived here, no one else had ever occupied the downstairs, with a little help from blared music, stomping footsteps, and toilet-flushing whenever someone else arrived to check out the place. Hee hee.

Lydia had always been just a little more than the average paranoid and suspicious. In the 14 months of her life that she could remember, that is. She felt

the constant need to watch her back, to always have, within her eyesight, a door, an escape. A lot of her sleep issues had to do with being on hyper-alert. Every creak, thud, noise was magnified. Any sound she wasn't familiar with placed her on instant alert and got her heart pumping madly, so she'd memorized all the sounds in the house. If someone were to move in below her, she'd never sleep, for she wouldn't be able to predict their sounds. She'd had sleep issues ever since she could remember. The specialist thought it might have to do with the 'accident', and all the rest of the life that she'd had that she couldn't remember.

She'd basically been born in the ICU in the hospital. They told her she'd been comatose for two months, and had arrived with a variety of contusions, bruises, a few broken ribs, and some blunt force trauma to the head, not enough to explain her two-month coma, as her brain hadn't swelled, surgery hadn't been required, and she should have wound up with a bad concussion, at best. What she hadn't arrived with was any memory or identification as to who she was.

Her memory had never come back, so eventually she donned the name Lydia Marie Smith. No family or friends had ever come to claim her, despite the pictures all over social media, flyers, and everything else saying, 'Who am I?' It's like she'd never existed prior to 14 months ago, but according to her specialist, that was impossible. She had to have existed. Lydia didn't even know when her birthday was or how old she was, so had taken a vote on how old she looked, at the time, and 24 had won out. She marked her birthday on the day she woke up in the ICU, so she claimed herself to be 25 now.