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Antoinette Moses  
Excerpt  
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## Chapter 1 *The man without a name*

‘What’s your name?’ asked Doctor Cox.

The man in the bed did not answer.

‘Open your eyes,’ said Doctor Cox.

The man in the bed opened his eyes. He looked at the doctor.

‘Do you understand the question?’ asked Doctor Cox.

‘Yes,’ said the man in the bed. ‘I do.’

‘Good,’ said Doctor Cox again. The doctor smiled at the man. It was a nice smile. ‘And do you know your name?’



‘No,’ said the man in the bed. ‘I don’t know what my name is.’

The man in the bed said nothing for a moment. The doctor waited and watched him.

‘Who is this man?’ thought Doctor Cox. ‘I don’t know who he is or where he comes from. I know that a woman found him yesterday in the street. The woman telephoned the police and the police brought him here to the hospital. I know he had blue jeans and a jacket, a green shirt and black socks and shoes. His clothes were clean, but he had no money and no papers.’

‘I’m Doctor Philip Cox,’ Doctor Cox said to the man. ‘You can call me Philip.’

‘You’re a doctor,’ said the man. He looked at the doctor. ‘And this is a hospital.’ The man in the bed spoke very slowly.

‘Yes,’ answered Doctor Cox, but now he did not smile. ‘What’s the problem with this man?’ thought Doctor Cox. ‘He has language. He understands words, but he doesn’t know who he is or where he comes from. Does he remember or doesn’t he? The police don’t know who he is. I don’t know who he is. And we need to know these things. Somewhere, somebody is waiting for him.’

‘You look at a man and what do you see?’ thought Doctor Cox. ‘You see very little. It’s not easy to know a man without language. You need words, you need names and places. People have family and friends. Who am I, for example?’ he thought.

‘I’m a doctor. Yes, this is my work. At the hospital I’m Doctor Cox. But my friends and my wife know me as Philip and my children know me as Dad. They don’t know

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Doctor Cox. Doctor Cox, Philip and Dad. They are all me, but they are not the same. Without family and friends, and without work, what am I? I need to know more, much more, about this man,' he thought. He spoke to the man again.



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‘We’re going to find out who you are,’ said Doctor Cox. He sat on the man’s bed and smiled at him. ‘You must be somebody’s husband or somebody’s son or somebody’s brother. Somewhere there are people looking for you, waiting for you. I want to help you. I need to find who you are and then I can help you.’

‘Thank you, Doctor,’ said the man in the bed.

‘Where do you come from? Do you think you live near here?’ asked Doctor Cox.

‘Where is here?’ the man in the bed asked him.

‘Here?’ answered Doctor Cox. ‘This is Exeter. We are in Exeter, in Devon, in England.’

‘I don’t know where I come from,’ said the man. ‘I don’t think it’s Exeter. I don’t think I know Exeter.’

‘When we find a man and we don’t know his name,’ said Doctor Cox, ‘we call him John Doe. Can I call you John?’

‘I saw a man in a film called John Doe,’ said the man in the bed. He looked at the doctor and smiled.

‘That’s good,’ said Doctor Cox. ‘That’s very good. You remember that. You went to a film. What was the film?’

‘I don’t know, Doctor. I don’t remember very much. I remember I went to the film. It was in a big cinema. There was a man called John Doe in the film, but I think he was dead.’

‘You’re not dead, John,’ said the Doctor. ‘You’re alive. But I want to know who you are. I need to know who you are. I need to ask you some questions.’

‘OK, Doctor,’ said John. ‘Ask your questions.’