Michaela gazed at the passing landscape as the express train crossed Ohio toward Pennsylvania.
Sully tapped her hand, "Not too much longer. You feelin' all right?"

Her attention turned to him, "Yes, fine. Just a little stiff from sitting so long."

"Here," he urged her to lean forward. "Let me help."

Sully began to massage her shoulders.

"Mmm," she closed her eyes. "That feels wonderful."

He continued to work his magic, "You gettin' excited t' see your classmates?"

"Nervous," she specified. "It has been twenty years, after all."

"Why's that make ya nervous?" he was curious.

"I wonder how they've fared in their careers," she mentioned.

"Far as I'm concerned, you're the top doctor," he commended.

"And you're prejudiced, Mr. Sully," she turned up the corner of her mouth.

"How many women were in your graduatin' class," he was curious.

She returned, "Twenty one, and I've lost touch with all of them except Miriam."

"Is she bringin' her husband?" he raised an eyebrow.

"Yes," she smiled. "But as far as I'm concerned, you're the top husband."

He grinned, "I work at it."

She turned to face him, "And I'm ever grateful."

Michaela lifted her hand to caress his neck, prompting Sully to lean closer for a kiss.

Then he eyed the door to their compartment, "We got a while 'til dinner."

She observed the gleam in his eye, "What are you suggesting?"

"Nothin'," he stood up to secure the door.

Then he returned to her side, "You sure you're feelin' okay? It's been kinda bumpy since we hit the subfreezin' temperatures."

"I'm fine, Sully," she assured.

"Good," he lightly caressed her cheek.

Then he undid the pins which held her hair in place. Her long tresses cascaded down her back.

"I sure do love your hair," he ran his fingers through the locks.

Michaela's pulse skipped a beat, "I love when you touch it."

He continued his tender ministrations while unbuttoning her blouse and drawing it from her shoulders.
"Sully," her voice trembled slightly.

"Mmm?" he smiled at her reaction.

She paused, then started to undo his tie, "Don't stop."

"You think anyone would notice if we didn't go t' dinner at all?" he lowered the straps of her camisole to caress her breast.

"Yes," she gulped.

"Who?" he kissed her.

She guided his hand to her swelling belly, "This little one."

He smiled, "Then we best make this fast."

"No," she slid her palm beneath the material of his shirt. "Not fast."

Sully eyed her with the intensity of his heart's passion, then recited:

"I ne'er was struck before that hour
With love so sudden and so sweet.
Her face it bloomed like a sweet flower
And stole my heart away complete."

Michaela leaned back, pulling him toward her.

Lightly running her fingertip along his lips, she offered, "Was that Herrick?"

"John Clare," he identified the poet.

He became aware of the subtle change in her.

"What's wrong?" his brow creased.

"This isn't very comfortable," she frowned.

Sully stood up and finished removing his shirt. Her heart leapt at the sight of his magnificent physique.

Watching him with an alluring smile, she reached up, "But that doesn't matter."

"No," he drew her up into a standing position. "It matters a lot."

He kissed her. Michaela began to melt in his arms.

Then he suddenly stopped, "Hold that thought a minute."

With a single fluid motion, he pulled down the back of the seat to reveal a bed.

"Think this might be more comfortable?" he gestured toward the mattress.

"You're quite considerate of me," she smiled.

"I gotta take care o' the mother of my children," he unhooked her skirt and slid it past her hips.

Continuing his enticing kisses, Sully guided her to the bed, then positioned himself beside her.
"How I adore you," she felt his warm body next to hers.

"Seems t' me we've had some pretty good times on trains," he mused.

"Some of our best times," she agreed.

His eyes peered into hers. An electrifying connection immediately flowed between them. With feathery touches, he trailed his hand between her breasts and stomach. Then his caresses found the area where the baby was cocooned. Michaela clasped the sides of his head, guiding his kisses to her softest, most sensitive places. The sensations he stirred made her shudder. Up from her navel, to her breasts and throat, he kissed her chin and inviting lips.

Sully felt Michaela's hands running down his back. He knew it was his invitation for more intimate contact. He positioned himself to renew their connection. The rocking of the train matched the rhythm of their bodies. Each felt a warmth building within. Hands and hearts locked as the motion intensified.

Their mutual arousal was reaching its peak. Lost in his wife, Sully finally brought himself fully to her. Michaela's reaction mirrored his, and after repeated waves of pleasure, the pace of their union began to calm.

"Oh, Sully," she stroked his arm. "I love you so much. What would I do without you?"

"You'd be a lot thinner in about three months," he teased.

"I always want to remember our moments like this," she maintained her serious expression.

"I'll keep remindin' ya," he kissed her sweetly. "But right now, we best get dressed. I don't want you missin' supper."

"One more moment," she snuggled closer.

She fell silent, and Sully wondered if she had dozed off. He kissed her temple.

She stirred.

"It was hard leaving the children behind," she finally spoke.

"They'll be fine," he assured. "They got a lot o' folks watchin' after 'em."

"Noah was getting over a catarrh," she reminded. "His lungs...."

"He's okay, an' we'll be home before ya know it," he drew her closer. "Ya know we couldn't have brought 'em with us."

"Yes," she sighed.

"So, it's just you an' me," he grinned.

She smiled, "In Philadelphia. What shall we do?"

"Besides goin' t' your reunion?" he raised an eyebrow. "Well, ya had us come early so we could see museums, libraries, an' maybe an opera."

"Do you mind?" she gauged his expression.

"Nope," he kissed her again.
Debby K's DQ Fan Fiction-Remembrance of Things Past

Her stomach rumbled, "I think we should eat now."

************

A two week, record breaking cold wave had gripped the Northeast. Freezing temperatures continued throughout the day and evening of January 26, 1880 as a 25-car freight train known as "Extra Number Three" prepared to leave Harrisburg for Pittsburgh.

Ben Taylor, the engineer, told his conductor before pulling out, "We gotta be extra careful. In this cold, the iron wheels can become brittle. Maybe we oughta string a bell rope through the cars in case ya see something. You can signal me if there's an emergency."

George Goodwin, the conductor, looked at his pocket watch, "We've taken plenty of precautions. There's no time for that. Charlie's gonna have to ride back in the caboose with me."

"But he's the middle brake man," Taylor pointed out.

"There's no room for him to sit with all the oil cars we got," Goodwin noted. "Besides, he'll freeze his rear off in this weather."

************

Sully rubbed his hand against the frosted pane of glass in the dining car, "I'm glad we ain't out in this weather t'night."

"What happened to my rugged mountain man?" Michaela reached for his slice of pie.

"I reckon you've domesticated me," he retorted.

He continued to look at the passing lights.

Michaela was curious at his expression, "Is something wrong?"

"This train don't feel like it's steamin' right," he observed.

"Perhaps it's because of the cold," she explained.

"Maybe," he turned his attention to his dessert. "Hey, where's my...."

"Do you mind?" she dabbed the sides of her mouth with her napkin. "I craved some pie."

"I don't mind," he grinned.

************

When the oil train exited the 3600-foot long tunnel at Gallitzin, Pennsylvania, Albert Bishop, the station switchman, noticed sparks flying out from under one of the oil cars near the middle of the train. It was a broken axle. Bishop did not see a middle brakeman to warn about the damage, so he signaled the men in the caboose.

As the damaged car passed the switch just west of the station, the axle cracked. The car bounced up and down as the train continued. The men in the caboose tried to signal Taylor in the engine, but there was no bell rope. They raised lanterns to gain his attention but to no avail. Instead of watching the rear of the train for signals, the front brakeman was occupied shoveling coal for the fireman in order to keep warm. Goodwin and the rear brakemen frantically applied the brakes in an effort to stop the train, but it continued onward.

The caboose struck a bridge piling and separated from the oil tank in front of it, which flipped over. The oil tank came to rest diagonally across the eastbound track. The engineer, who had been slowing down to stop for water, felt the jolt
and the load lighten. He warned his brakeman not to apply the brakes because he feared the rear part of the train would run up on him. But the remainder of the rear of the train had already come to a stop on a bridge.

************

"Hold my hand," Sully reached out to his wife as they made their way along the corridor back to their compartment. The swaying of the car was becoming more extreme.

"Do you think they should slow down?" Michaela wondered.

"Seems like it t' me," he held her close.

************

Dan Carroll knew that another train would be coming soon. He grabbed a red light and yelled to the flagman in the tower to do the same. They rushed along the track to signal the danger. The westbound passenger express train was running late and was about a mile west of the derailed oil train. The men at the tower could see its headlight approaching as they tried to warn it.

Passengers on the express were beginning to settle down for the night. Michaela and Sully finally reached the door of their compartment.

The engineer of the express could faintly see two red lights and a white light, but he was not certain because the headlight of the oil train was brighter than the lanterns. In addition, he knew that trains usually stopped at the Gallitzin tower for water, so he thought it might just be a precaution. He asked the fireman if he could see, but after gazing into a glowing furnace, he was not much help.

Taking no chances, the express engineer signaled the brakemen with three blasts of the whistle. He ordered the fireman to apply the patent brakes, but they didn't seem to hold. Next, he threw the engine into reverse. The fireman, realizing that the train would not stop in time, leaped to safety. Brakemen and conductors alike were applying brakes throughout the express.

Patent brakes, which were designed for coaches, were not effective on the large sleepers. The train's speed slowed, but it failed to stop.

"Sully!" Michaela screamed. "What's happening?"

"Feels like they're tryin' t' stop the train," he struggled to hold on to her.

The express engine suddenly plunged into a derailed oil tank car and exploded upon impact. A horrific inferno erupted which illuminated the night sky for miles around.

Sleeper cars began to burst into flames. In their Pullman car amid pitch darkness, Sully felt the floor of the car for his wife.

"Michaela," he coughed.

There was no answer.

"Michaela!" he became frantic.

Then he felt her still body. He reached for a lantern and lit it. His wife was unconscious, a bruise on her forehead.

"Sir, are you injured?" a man approached them.
"No, but my wife is," he gulped.

"Most of the train is on fire," the man informed him. "Our car seems to have been spared for the moment. I'll help you get her outside."

"I can carry her," Sully swallowed hard. "Could you get the medical bag in our compartment there?"

"Of course," the man assisted him. "Are you a doctor?"

"No," Sully reached the exit. "She is."

The stench of burning oil and screams of injured passengers filled the air as Sully reached a safe distance from their car. After setting his wife down on the ground and assuring that she was still alive, Sully ventured back toward the train.

"Where are you going?" someone called to him.

"T' get the people out," Sully shouted.

"They got everyone" the man shook his head. "All that was left was the luggage, and they got it out. It's over there."

Sully glanced at the baggage. Spotting their trunk, he retrieved it and brought it to Michaela's side.

She was starting to come to.

"Hold still," Sully urged. "Ya hurt your head."

"Wha.... what happened?" she struggled to focus.

"We hit another train," he wiped her brow.

"My bag," she reached for her medical bag. "I've got to help these people."

"You gotta take it easy," Sully cautioned. "You were unconscious for a while."

A stranger frantically screamed, "We need a doctor. Please, is anyone here a doctor?"

"That lady is," the man who had helped them from the train pointed.

"Thank you for your help," Michaela sounded almost formal to her husband as she left him.

Folks from the surrounding countryside began arriving with blankets, food and lanterns.

Through the night, Michaela tended to the injured. Sully helped to set broken legs and bandage heads. He kept a fire ablaze to create more light and warmth at her makeshift hospital.

By dawn, another train arrived with medical personnel and supplies.

"Now you can get some rest," Sully touched her arm.

"I am rather exhausted," she admitted with a smile.

A railroad official approached them, "We can have you on another train to Philadelphia in a few hours."
"But I'm going to Colorado," Michaela stated.

Sully was surprised by her answer, "You sure you feel okay?"

"What are your names?" the man glanced at his passenger roster.

"Byron Sully," he responded. "An' this here's...."

"Dr. Michaela Quinn," she spoke up.

"Did you lose your baggage?" he queried.

"No," Sully gestured. "I got it over there."

"Again, I'm in your debt," Michaela smiled.

Noting the newly arrived medical personnel, Sully advised, "I think one of the doctors oughta take a look at that bump on your head."

The railroad official informed them, "They've opened the local church to treat passengers and to stay warm. There will be a few physicians on hand. I'll let you know when the next train is here. Meanwhile, I'll see to your baggage."

"Thank you," Michaela wiped her brow.

"You saved a lot o' lives last night," Sully commended.

Her eyes watered, "There was a couple who lost their three children. I'm afraid that's what will stay with me."

"Ya did all ya could," he touched her back.

She stepped away, uncomfortable with his familiarity. They began to walk toward the church.

"Somethin' wrong?" he questioned when they reached the door.

"Your cheek," she suddenly noticed. "It's cut."

"It's nothin'," he dismissed it.

A physician approached her, "Dr. Quinn, I was told that you took care of these people last night."

"I had help," she smiled at Sully.

"Well, I want to commend you," the doctor complimented. "I'm Dr. Cross."

"Could you take a look at her, too?" Sully requested. "She hit her head pretty hard in the collision. She was unconscious for a while."

"Of course," Cross opened his bag.

"I don't think it's serious," Michaela sat down on a cot.

The physician commenced to examine her eyes and the bump on her head.

"Does your head hurt?" he questioned.

"Some," she admitted.
"I'll give you some laudanum," Cross reached for it.

"No!" Sully insisted.

************

Chapter 2

************

"Why not?" the physician was puzzled.

"Dr. Cross," Sully observed his wife with concern. "Could I speak t' you privately?"

The two men stepped away from Michaela.

Sully kept his voice low, "My wife don't seem t' remember much at the moment, but she's pregnant. I'd like ya t' check on the baby, too."

Michaela's struggled to listen, "What are you talking about?"

"She may be suffering from amnesia, caused by the trauma of hitting her head," the doctor assessed.

"But she knows who she is," Sully stated.

"I'm sure this is only temporary," Cross noted.

Michaela became more insistent, "Why are you talking to Mr. Sully about my injury?"

"Dr. Quinn," Cross returned to her. "If you'll come with me, I'd like to check your.... condition."

"What condition?" she resisted.

"Michaela, you're gonna have a baby," Sully said.

She was indignant, "I am NOT pregnant. I'm not even married."

Sully felt his heart sink.

"You obviously remember your name," Cross pointed out to her. "Do you know this man's name?"

"Yes," she nodded. "Byron Sully."

Sully felt a glimmer of hope but then recalled that she had heard him introduce himself to Dr. Cross earlier.

"Do you know what day it is?" the doctor continued.

Michaela struggled, "I.... I'm not certain."

"It's January 27, 1880," the physician informed her.

"1880?" her eyes widened. "That's impossible."

"It's true, Michaela," Sully nodded.

She looked at the two men, "I think this must be some sort of joke. I.... was on my way to Colorado Springs.... in response to an advertisement for a physician."
"That was almost thirteen years ago," Sully spoke low to the physician.

"All right," Cross did not want to further upset her. "I have something I can give you for your headache. Then I want you to rest."

She began to relax as he administered the medicine. Cross nodded for Sully's attention. Again, the two men stepped away from her.

"Go easy, Mr. Sully," he cautioned. "Don't expect her to remember everything at once."

Sully swallowed hard, "Okay."

"If you'll excuse me, I need to see other patients," he turned to leave.

"The baby," Sully touched his arm. "What about the baby?"

"I can't force her to let me examine her," he shook his head. "But she isn't complaining of any abdominal pain or spotting."

When the physician left, Sully returned to Michaela's side. Suddenly, both of them felt awkward.

"Can I get ya anythin'?" he offered.

"No, thank you," she responded.

"I know this seems real strange t' you," he was tentative.

"You said you were on your way to Philadelphia," she recalled.

"T' your reunion," he specified.

"What reunion?" her brow wrinkled.

Sully remembered the doctor's advice, "I think ya oughta get some sleep. I'll let ya know when the next train's here."

"I am rather tired," she lay back on the cot. "Thank you, Mr. Sully."

He watched her close her eyes. Would she remember their past? Their present? What would he do if she.... He stopped himself from thinking the worst. She would be fine. Michaela was the strongest person he knew. She would remember.

************

Having been transported to the depot of the nearby town, Michaela sat on a bench. She had been quiet since awakening at the church earlier. When she spotted a newspaper, she lifted it and read the headline about the train wreck. Her look of curiosity changed to one of shock.

"It IS 1880," she uttered.

Sully approached her, "Conductor says its time t' board."

She looked up at him, her eyes full of fear, "What's happened to me? To the past thirteen years?"
"Dr. Cross said your memories will come back," he touched her arm.

She felt a rush of fear, "I.... I don't even know where I'm going."

"We...." he paused. "We were goin' t' Philadelphia. But, I don't think that's such a good idea now. Maybe I oughta take ya home."

"To Boston?" she tilted her head.

"To Colorado Springs," he identified.

"All aboard!" the conductor called.

"I'll go to Philadelphia," she determined.

"But...." Sully stopped when she began to climb the steps of the train.

Following her down the corridor, a porter asked his name.

"Sully," he answered.

"This here's your room Mr. an' Mrs. Sully," the young man opened the door. "The railroad's offerin' everythin' complimentary after what you folks have been through."

"Much obliged," Sully handed him a coin.

Sully paused at the door, waiting for Michaela to enter. She hesitated.

"This is our compartment," he told her.

"I.... I don't feel right about this, Mr. Sully," she tensed.

"It's okay," his voice was calming. "You can get some rest." Sensing her fear was because of him, he added, "I'll go get ya a cup of tea."

"Thank you," she was grateful.

She entered the compartment and closed the door behind her. Alone, she gazed at herself in the small mirror above the basin. Instantly, she was surprised to see that she was no longer a young woman. There were a few wrinkles and a few stray gray hairs. Calculating her age, if it were truly 1880, she realized she was nearly 47. She splashed some water on her face and dabbed the moisture with a towel.

Her clothes were filthy. She went to the trunk for a change of apparel. At least that was the same. It was her trunk. She unlatched the lock and opened it. On one side were a woman's clothes. She did not recognize any of the dresses. On the other side were.... buckskins? A man's shirts?

She stepped back, uncertain of what had happened to her. Steeling her nerves with a deep breath, Michaela selected one of the dresses and set it on the seat. She removed her coat and began to undo her blouse. When she unhooked her skirt, she saw it. Her abdomen. It was bloated, almost as if....

"I can't be...." she banished the thought.

But she could no longer deny it. With a gentle caress, she rubbed her belly.

"A baby?" she swallowed hard. "I'm going to have a baby?"
Mr. Sully had been right. She was pregnant. From her appearance, she estimated perhaps five months along... and at an age where most women become grandmothers.

But how did Mr. Sully know her? She only remembered meeting him when she woke up on the ground last night. She did not even recall the wreck of the train.

He had been so kind to her, so helpful during the frightful hours of helping the injured last night. She struggled to recall more. A knock at the door interrupted her thoughts.

"It's me," Sully's voice came from the other side. "I brought your tea."

She reached for a robe and quickly put it on. Then she slowly slid open the door. She studied him more carefully than she had noticed his appearance before. He was the most handsome man she had ever seen. His skin was tanned, his jaw chiseled, and his eyes. They were the bluest imaginable.

"Your tea?" he repeated.

"Oh," she stepped back to allow him in. "Thank you."

"You don't have to thank me," he handed her the cup.

It was then that Sully spotted the open trunk. He imagined she would have questions about his clothing.

"Why don't ya sit down?" he gestured as he closed the door.

She immediately tensed. He noticed.

"I won't bite," he grinned.

She felt herself stir at his smile. Quickly, she averted her eyes.

Longing to take her in his arms and comfort her, Sully sat on the seat opposite her instead. He folded his hands uncomfortably.

Michaela cleared her throat, "It appears that you are correct."

"That sometimes happens," he joked.

Her serious expression indicated she was not amused.

"Right about what?" he sobered.

"I... I appear to be pregnant," she was embarrassed. "But... I don't know...."

He wanted to reach for her, "You're due in early May."

"How do you know so much about me?" her brow wrinkled.

Sully's eyes saddened, but he did not answer.

"You," she gauged from his reaction. "You're the father? My husband?"

He nodded in the affirmative.

She looked at the trunk, "Those are your clothes."
"Uh-huh," he returned.

"You dress as an Indian?" she was curious.

He smiled, "Most of the time."

"I.... I'm sorry," she shook her head. "I don't remember any of this."

"I know it's hard," he sympathized. "But don't put pressure on yourself. Just.... try t' relax."

"Relax when the past thirteen years of my life have disappeared?" she raised her voice.

When he saw tears welling in her eyes, Sully could hold back no longer. He went to her side and tentatively put his arm around her. She did not resist.

"You're very kind to me, Mr. Sully," she let her tears flow more freely.

"Just Sully," he took the tea and set it on a nearby stand. "Just call me Sully."

"I'm Michaela Sully?" the thought suddenly occurred to her.

"Sometimes," he smiled. "You wanted t' keep your Pa's last name when we got married. So when ya practice medicine, you're still Dr. Quinn."

She felt strangely warm and safe in his arms. Her tension began to lessen, and she found herself yawning.

"Here," he helped her up. "I'll pull down the bed for ya."

She did not object. Her fatigue was too great. Soon, she was asleep.

************

Mile after mile passed. Sully's attention never wavered from his wife. She looked so beautiful and vulnerable as she slept. But what tormented thoughts she must be thinking, wondering about her past. Their past. Should he wait for her to ask about it, or should he volunteer everything?

She stirred slightly, a wrinkle creasing her brow.

Was she having a bad dream, he wondered. Sully rose from the cramped seat opposite her and sat on the edge of the bed. Her robe was open. He drew up the covers to protect her from the chill. But he paused when he saw her hand resting on her abdomen. Even though she had no recollection of him or their family, she still had an instinct where the baby was concerned. Gently, he stroked her belly.

Michaela did not open her eyes, but she felt his hand on her. She dare not react. What kind of man was this Byron Sully? What kind of husband? Was he demanding, forcing her to bear him a child at her age? No, her instinct told her otherwise. His touch was tender. His eyes.... it was as if he could see right into her soul when he gazed at her.

She felt her body begin to stir at his ministrations. It seemed perfectly natural, but her mind could not fathom it. She had never let a man touch her like that.... permitting David only innocent kisses.

"David," her voice was faint as she recalled hearing of his death.

Sully caught his breath, stung by his wife's soft mention of her first love. He withdrew his hand and returned to his seat. He watched her intently. Was she remembering only David?

He swallowed hard and shook his head. She WILL remember us, he assured himself. He had to do something. Maybe
make himself more presentable. His clothing was dirty, and he needed a shave. Standing, he removed his shirt and trousers. Then he stepped to the basin to lather his face.

Michaela smelled the scent of something strangely familiar. Cologne. She opened her eyes and was shocked to see an unclad Sully lightly tapping the liquid on his cleanly shaven face. She tried not to react to the sight of him... to keep her pulse calm. She had only seen a naked man once... during an autopsy, and the deceased was not nearly as... endowed as her husband.

Sully pivoted to reach for a clean shirt from the trunk. Quickly closing her eyes, Michaela wondered if he had seen her watching him. Opening her eyelids a slit, she noticed that he had turned his back to her. He was pulling up a clean pair of trousers.

"Michaela?" he thought she had moved.

She opened her eyes, "What?"

He knelt down beside her berth, "You all right?"

"Yes," her voice sounded different.

"Did ya sleep okay?" he hoped.

"I.... I did," she replied.

"Ya must have been dreamin'," he said. "Ya mentioned someone."

"Who?" she was curious.

"David," Sully tried to show no emotion.

"David?" she replied. "My fiance?"

Sully's jaw tensed. She noticed.

"He's dead," she asserted.

Sully placed his hand on hers, "No, he ain't. Turns out he was in a prisoner of war camp an' never told ya he was alive."

Michaela became defensive, "David would never do that. We were to be married."

Sully wanted to explain, "He came t' Colorado Springs.... right after I proposed t' ya. He'd become a naturalist. He hid his identity at first, but you figured out it was him."

She listened in silence. Sully studied her expression. Had he said too much? David was still fresh in her mind and heart.

"Why...." she struggled to understand. "Why didn't he tell me he was alive?"

"The War changed him.... in a lot o' ways," Sully's voice was soft. "He didn't think you could still love him."

"Then why did he come back?" she demanded.

"T' see what had become of ya," he returned. "T' see if you were happy."

"Was I?" she felt tormented.
"Were ya what?" he was uncertain.

"Was I happy?" Michaela clarified.

"I thought so," he smiled slightly. "We were engaged."

"I was engaged to David, too," she realized. "What you must have thought of me."

"I thought..." he stopped himself. Choosing his words carefully, he went on. "I thought ya needed space t' decide which of us ya wanted t' marry."

She looked into the blue eyes she was coming to like, "I chose you."

He grinned, "Strange as it seems."

"It... doesn't seem so strange," she found herself responding.

Sully permitted himself a glimmer of hope that she was remembering... something about them. If not their shared past, then maybe how they felt toward each other.

"I think ya better get dressed," he changed the subject. "We're gonna be in Philadelphia soon. Then we can decide what t' do next."

"You said I.... we were going to attend my reunion," she commented. "What will I say to my classmates when they asked what I've been doing for the past twenty years?"

"I reckon you could concentrate on what ya did the first seven," he retorted.

She felt her heart leap at his winning smile. She turned up the corner of her mouth in return.

Sitting up, she looked at the trunk.

"I... guess you'd want some privacy t' get dressed," Sully interpreted.

"If you don't mind," she nodded.

"Sure," he stood to exit. "I.... I'll just wait in the corridor."

"Thank you," she felt suddenly shy.

He turned to leave her.

"Sully," she beckoned.

He closed his eyes, relishing the tone of her voice as she spoke his name.

"What?" he glanced back at her.

"I do want to remember us," she felt a lump in her throat.

He wanted to embrace her, but refrained, "You will."

************

Chapter 3

************
Sully supervised their luggage as Michaela approached the front desk of the hotel.

"We're here for the reunion of the Female Medical College of Pennsylvania," she stated. "We need two rooms."

"I'm sorry, Madame," he shook his head. "But we're booked solid. I can only give you a single room with a single bed."

"Is there a problem?" Sully approached.

"They have only one room," she informed him.

He assured, "That'll be okay, Michaela. Don't worry."

The man rotated the guest book, "Would you sign here for your wife and yourself?"

"Sure," Sully lifted the pen.

"I'll have a bellboy bring up your trunk," he handed Sully the key. "You're in room 217. At the top of the staircase, turn left."

"Thanks," Sully accepted the key.

Michaela stood by and watched their exchange.

"Michaela?" Sully offered his arm.

She hesitated, then linked her arm through his as they headed for the staircase.

"See anyone ya know?" Sully glanced around.

"No," she sighed.

When they reached the room, Sully unlocked and opened the door. He stepped back to allow Michaela to enter first. Then he showed the bellboy where to place their trunk.

Sully handed the young man a coin at the door, "Thanks."

"Yes, sir," the lad tipped his hat.

Sully closed the door and turned to survey the room. The scent of fresh cut flowers filled the air.

"Wonder where they got them this time of year?" he pointed.

"I'm certain they have a greenhouse," Michaela replied tersely. "The finer hotels do."

"I've stayed in a few before," he defended.

"I'm sorry," she realized her tone had offended him.

"That's all right," he removed his jacket and unbuttoned his vest. "You must be hungry. I can get them t' send us up somethin' t' eat."

"When does the actual reunion begin?" she was curious.

Sully went to the trunk and pulled out several papers, "This here's the agenda."

She perused the contents, "Nothing until the day after tomorrow."
"We came t' Philadelphia a few days early t'...." he stopped himself.

"To what?" she wanted him to go on.

"T' see some of the sights," he recalled. "Museums, libraries.... the opera."

"Do you like the opera?" her eyes lit up.

"I do when I go with you," he smiled.

"Then, if something is playing tomorrow night, by all means let's go," she sounded enthusiastic.

"Before we go anywhere, Michaela, I want ya t' do somethin' for me," Sully remarked.

"What?" she was curious.

"I want ya t' have a doctor check you.... an' the baby," he implored.

She assured, "I'll look one up tomorrow, but I feel perfectly fine."

He noted, "We've been real careful with this pregnancy, 'cause...."

She sensed his hesitation, "Because of my age?"

"Partly," he nodded.

"Why else?" she questioned.

"Let me get us somethin' t' eat," he stated. "Then I'll tell ya why."

"Could you see if the concierge could get us tickets to the opera, too?" she raised an eyebrow.

"Sure," he smiled.

*******

Sully had ordered all of Michaela's favorites from the menu. When the meal was delivered, she could not contain her delight.

"You really do know me," she smiled. "And I am famished."

He was amused at the sight of his wife devouring all of the delicacies. It was almost as if.... he stopped himself, but she wasn't remembering.

"I got us these," he withdrew two tickets from his pocket.

"The opera?" she assumed.

"Yep, for t'morrow night," he was glad to have pleased her. "'La Traviata."

"My favorite," her eyes widened. "Thank you, Sully."

"You're welcome," he grinned.

He chose not to tell her that they had seen the opera before, first in Boston, then Philadelphia. Maybe she would remember that summer of 1876 when they brought the children East.
Michaela leaned back, her belly full. She turned her attention to wonder at the child growing within her. Then an idea occurred to her. She stood and reached for her medical bag. Retrieving the stethoscope, she placed the ends to her ears and the bell beneath the material of her skirt.

Sully studied her expression in earnest. When he saw her eyes widen, he smiled. She heard a heartbeat. He hoped she would offer for him to listen.

Michaela glanced at him. She detected the look of love in his eyes, and that smile.

"Would you like to listen?" she invited.

"If ya don't mind," he felt a lump in his throat.

She removed the ear pieces and handed them to him. Sully knelt down to listen for the first time to the faint heartbeat of their baby.

"It never ceases t' amaze me," he looked at her in awe.

"You've listened before?" she wondered.

"First time for this one," he nodded.

"Sully," her brow wrinkled. "Do we have.... other children?"

He noticed her expression, "Maybe you oughta get some rest."

"No," she clasped his arm. "Tell me."

He handed her the stethoscope and stepped to the window.

She did not know what to think. Why wouldn't he tell her?

Michaela rose from the table and walked to him. She lightly placed her hand on his shoulder. When he turned to face her, she saw the glistening of a tear on his cheek. Reaching up, she touched it.

"I'm sorry.... so sorry I don't remember," she felt her heart ache. "Please tell me. Have we had other children?"

"I don't wanna overwhelm ya with too much," he swallowed hard. He guided her to the bed. "Sit down."

She became more anxious but complied with his wishes.

Sully took a deep breath, then began, "We got seven other kids."

"Seven!" her mouth dropped.

"Three adopted an' four of our own," he explained. "When you arrived in Colorado Springs, ya met Charlotte Cooper. On her deathbed, she entrusted her children Matthew, Colleen an' Brian t' you."

From her expression, he knew she did not recognize the names.

"When you an' me got married, we adopted 'em," he said.

"When were we married?" she queried.

Sully told her, "May 20, 1870."
"Nearly ten years ago," she calculated.

"Another reason for makin' this trip.... t' celebrate our anniversary early," he informed her. "You won't be able t' travel in May."

She placed her hand on her abdomen, then returned her attention to him, "We have four children of our own?"

"Yep," Sully resumed. "Katie was born in May 1871. Josef in 1874...."

"Josef...." she stopped him.

"You remember somethin'?" he anticipated.

"We named him for my father?" she assumed.

"Uh-huh," Sully maintained a brave facade. "Then in 1878, ya had the twins."

"Twins!" her eyes widened.

"Annie an' Noah," he identified them.

"And now a fifth child," she struggled to absorb it all. "You mentioned.... that part of the reason for being careful with this pregnancy is my age. What other reasons are there?"

Sully did not want to upset her further, "Why don't I show ya the kids' pictures? Maybe that would help ya remember."

"Yes," she consented. "I want to see them."

Sully began to show her the photographs of their family. He searched her face, hoping for any signs of recognition. There were none.

She touched each image, praying to find a morsel of familiarity, "The boys look so much like you."

"Josef has your smile," he mused. "We had a hard time keepin' him still for this picture."

She turned up the corner of her mouth, "When I determined to move west, I never dreamed...."

"Never dreamed you'd marry a mountain man an' use Cheyenne medicine?" he added.

"Cheyenne medicine?" she was surprised.

"Our friend, Cloud Dancin', taught ya," he clarified.

She shook her head, unable to recall.

"It'll come back t' ya," his voice assured.

"I'm so sorry," she felt her emotions building. "This must be terribly difficult for you."

"Hey," he clasped her hand. "I ain't the one who banged my head. But you done enough rescuin' me over the years."

"Rescuing you?" she was uncertain.
He gazed into her eyes, "You saved my life, Michaela, not just physically."

"What do you mean?" she was interested.

He leaned forward, "When I met you, I was livin' alone.... just me an' Wolf."

"Wolf?" she was surprised.

"Uh-huh," he continued. "My first wife, Abigail, had died havin' our baby, Hannah."

"I was unable to save her life?" she questioned.

"It was before I met ya," Sully replied. "But I know you could've saved her an' my little girl."

"Hannah died, too?" she saddened.

"Yea," he paused, then continued. "After that, I decided to enlist in the Army an' ended up bein' set up t' kill an innocent man. So, I deserted an' returned t' Colorado. That's when the Cheyenne took me in. They became my family.... until I met you."

She was mesmerized by his story, "We became friends?"

"Best friends," he smiled. "Even though we hid what we were really feelin'. You're a stubborn woman."

"I am not," she countered.

"We helped the Cooper children an' the Cheyenne, until...." he stopped.

"Until?" she anticipated.

"Until we couldn't help 'em anymore," he was vague.

She perceived a deeper meaning to his words but probed no further. He looked tired.

"You haven't slept since the train wreck," she suddenly realized. "You must be exhausted."

"I'm okay," he shrugged.

"No," she stood up and gestured toward the bed. "Please, you must get some rest."

He hesitated.

"I insist," she tapped the mattress. "I'm the doctor. Remember?"

"I remember," he sounded wistful.

She drew back the covers and nudged him toward the bed.

Sully removed his shoes and stretched out, "Just for a little while. You let me know when you wanna go t' sleep. I'll move over t' the chair."

"All right," she agreed.

Michaela waited until he closed his eyes, then walked to the cushioned chair nearby. She carried the photographs Sully had shown her. Sitting down, she began to study the faces of her family.
"My children," she spoke softly. "Dear God, will I ever remember them?"

Her heart grew heavy. She struggled to recall the slightest tidbit about them. Matthew's and Colleen's wedding pictures brought no recollection.... Brian.... And her little ones.... their births.... their first words.... first steps.... anything. What did their voices sound like? Did she tuck them in each night? Listen to their prayers?

Tears began to stream down her cheeks, "God, please help me."

Fearing she might waken Sully, she willed herself to gain control of her emotions.

"Sully," she thought to herself. "What kind of man are you? A mountain man who likes opera?"

She thought about his consideration and kindness to her. And the tenderness in his voice when he spoke about each of their children. There must be more.... so much more that he wanted to tell her but was holding back. She wondered about the other reasons for his being concerned about her pregnancy. Had something been detected which he could not share?

Michaela glanced at her left hand. She studied the thick gold wedding band and the engagement ring with two small diamonds. Suddenly, Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet" crossed her mind.

Was it a memory or her mind wandering?

Her head began to throb. She carefully set down the photographs and reached for her medical bag. Some of its contents puzzled her. Digging to the bottom, she discovered several packets containing dried leaves and barks. Could this be the Cheyenne medicine of which Sully spoke?

Michaela opted for a familiar remedy for the pain. As she sat back to wait for it to take effect, she closed her eyes and sighed. She tried to relax, in the hope that some memory might find her.

She nearly drifted off to sleep, but voices in the hallway wakened her. The people passed by, and quiet returned. She glanced at the clock. Ten o'clock.... night.

Rising from the chair, she stepped toward the trunk, its contents still packed. Perhaps going through it could trigger a memory. She carefully hung each of her dresses, blouses and skirts, noting the extra material to allow for her pregnancy.

Then Michaela focused her attention on Sully's belongings. There were three suits and formal attire. She wondered on what occasions he might have worn them in the past. Next, she removed the buckskin pants. They seemed almost contoured to fit his body. Her cheeks flushed that she would think about something like that.

Michaela turned her attention to the buckskin jacket. She ran her hand along the fringe, then stopped at a tear which had been stitched up on its left shoulder. She suddenly saw herself screaming.... in a meadow.... by a tree. Why on earth would the jacket prompt that sort of reaction in her?

Her logical mind could find no meaning to the random thoughts she had experienced tonight. "Romeo and Juliet" and screaming.

"How absurd," she shook her head.

Separating their soiled clothing, she put them in a cloth sack which the hotel provided for items needing to be laundered. Then she opened the door and set them in the hallway. She closed it again and secured the lock.

Michaela pivoted to look at the spacious room, dominated by the large canopy bed. She approached it and stood beside her husband. He was sleeping so soundly, she did not want to disturb him. A lock of his long hair covered his eye. She gently reached down to draw it back.
She studied his face carefully. There were several scars, the most pronounced of which was beside his right eye. Lightly she touched it. A vision of a cliff suddenly entered her mind. Another random thought? No. She was certain that these pieces held some significance to her life. She would ask Sully about them tomorrow.

Glancing over her shoulder to insure that Sully was still asleep, she began to undo her blouse. Next came her skirt. Wearing only her camisole and bloomers, she walked to the closet to retrieve a nightgown. After a final glance at Sully, she slipped out of her undergarments.

Sully opened his eyes when he heard the sound of water being poured into the basin.

Michaela stood before the mirror, washing herself. She caressed her abdomen, then looked closer at the reflection of her shoulder. There was a scar near her left clavicle.

Sully knew she must be wondering how she got it. Would the sight of it prompt her to recall her shooting?

When Michaela reached for her gown, Sully immediately closed his eyes. He heard her move about the room, then felt the motion of the bed as she sat down beside him. With his back to her, he again opened his eyes.

Michaela debated. Should she waken Sully? He was so tired, and after all, they would be doing nothing improper by sleeping in the same bed. They were married. Certainly, he would demand nothing of her.

Sully held still, anticipating her request for him to rise from the bed. Instead, he noticed the room darken. Michaela had lowered the lamp and settled back into the bed. Their bodies did not touch, but just the fact that she had allowed him to stay gave him hope. Hope that she was remembering what they meant to each other.

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Chapter 4
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A slit of morning sunlight filtered into the room. Michaela opened her eyes and immediately became aware of something. Sully was spooned against her back, his hand resting on her abdomen.

Strangely, she did not want to pull away. She felt warm and protected. But.... she did not remember him.... or their life together.... or their children.

She touched his hand as it rested on her belly. It was so strong. Suddenly, she felt him flinch and pull away from her. "You awake?" he whispered.

"Yes," she did not move.

He cleared his throat, "I.... I'm sorry about my hand."

She turned over to look at him, "I suppose you're accustomed to our.... you know."

"Yea," he folded his arms across his chest. "Still, I shouldn't have done that."

"You were asleep, Sully," she assured. "You didn't do anything wrong."

He took a deep breath and exhaled slowly.

"Please," she touched his shoulder. "Don't be upset. It's all right. Truly."

His heart melted at the tone of her voice. God, Michaela, if you only knew how much I miss you. Miss us.

"What are you thinking?" she was puzzled at his expression.
Before he could think of a lie, he told her the truth, "You an' me."

She became anxious, "What about us?"

He did not answer.

"You can tell your best friend," she encouraged.

He decided to be honest, "I was thinkin' about how much I miss us.... hopin' you'll remember."

"I had some moments last night...." she paused.

"Really?" he raised his eyebrows.

"Bits and pieces," she identified.

"Tell me," he urged.

She held up her left hand, "I was looking at my rings, and I thought about 'Romeo and Juliet.'"

"Michaela," he smiled. "I gave ya your engagement ring when the town was performin' that play."

"You did?" she felt a rush of excitement.

"Uh-huh," he nodded. "What else did ya think about?"

"I was putting our clothes on the hangers when I noticed the rip on your buckskin jacket," she said.

"What did ya remember?" he anticipated.

"I was in a meadow.... leaning against a tree," she told him. "And I was screaming."

He related, "I was in a fight an' got stabbed in the shoulder. When you came t' tend t' me, you went int' labor with Katie. We delivered her in that meadow."

"I am remembering, aren't I?" she smiled broadly.

"Anythin' else?" he wondered.

"This," she touched the scar beside his eye. "Did it have something to do with a cliff?"

Sully swallowed hard, "I fell off of it. You saved my life."

"How did I get this scar?" she gestured to her shoulder.

"You were shot," he answered.

Overcome with the excitement of her remembrances, they unwittingly began to hold hands. Suddenly, Sully released her, hoping he had not offended her.

Michaela felt the intensity of his gaze.... peering into her soul.

"I have to tell you something...." she hesitated.
"What?" he did not break his gaze.

"Somewhere deep within me... inexplicably, I feel something," she paused.

"What do ya feel?" he probed.

"I feel... connected to you... part of you," she shyly confessed to him.

He felt as if his heart would burst, "Michaela."

"The way you say my name," she struggled to communicate her feelings. "It makes me want to remember everything."

He lifted his hand to her neck and tenderly caressed it. Michaela was electrified by his touch. Sully paused, gauging her reaction.

"You are part of me," he whispered. "An' you will remember."

Michaela caught her breath. The scent of him, the feel of him, she could not resist his overture. What was she doing? She didn't even know this man, yet she could not help herself.

She leaned closer and shut her eyes. Sully stroked the sides of her face with feathery touches. He softly kissed her eyelids, her chin.

It took every ounce of willpower he possessed, but Sully stopped himself.

Michaela opened her eyes, curious.

"This ain't right," he spoke low. "Not 'til you remember."

"You're an honorable man," she was compelled to tell him.

He pledged, "I'd do anythin' for you, Michaela."

"Would you come with me to see the doctor?" she invited.

"Course I will," he consented.

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Michaela fidgeted nervously with the drawstring of her purse.

Sully observed, "I don't much care for waitin' either."

"Is there anything we should tell the doctor about the baby?" she became more apprehensive.

The moment had come when he had to tell her, "Yea."

"What?" she inquired.

He struggled, "This baby... you conceived it after ya had a miscarriage last spring."

"I had a miscarriage?" she felt a pang.

"We didn't even know you were pregnant," he went on. "You were stabbed... an' lost the baby."

"Stabbed?" she was shocked.
"It was a madman," he related.

"I've been shot.... and stabbed," she shook her head. "This would never have happened in Boston."

"An' I'd have never met ya in Boston," he returned.

She looked at him and smiled slightly. Then she caressed her belly.

"Did we plan on this child?" she returned to the subject.

"It's a miracle," he spoke with tenderness. "The doctors didn't think you'd be able t' have any more."

"I must have wanted it very much," she assumed.

"We both did," he added.

She calculated, "You've lost two children then."

He did not respond at first, debating how much to tell her. He decided to venture further.

"We lost more," his voice was scarcely above a whisper.

"More miscarriages?" she felt her heart sink.

"Three all t'gether," he lowered his head. "The first was my fault."

"Your fault?" she could not fathom.

"Not long after Katie's first birthday, I helped with an Indian uprisin' on the reservation," he told her. "I was fightin' a soldier who came after me. That's what led t' me fallin' off the cliff. When you found me, I was nearly dead. We let the Army think I didn't survive so they'd stop lookin' for me."

She listened intently.

He placed his hand near hers, "You nursed me back t' health while I stayed in a cave. We had a few stolen moments there.... at a waterfall.... even one night when I snuck int' our house."

"We conceived a child while you were in hiding?" she assumed.

He looked up at her with reddened eyes, "The baby was gone before ya even had the chance t' tell me you were expectin'. I should have been there for ya, Michaela. I shouldn't have left ya all alone worryin' about me. Ya lost the baby 'cause o' me. I was selfish.... not thinkin' about what my actions could lead to."

"No," she denied. "You're the most unselfish man I know. You had to help your friends."

Instantly, she realized what she had said.

"You remember somethin'?" he straightened.

"I'm not certain," she felt odd. "There were explosives...."
"In the uprisin'," he nodded.

"Only flashes of memory," she sighed.

"It's comin' back," Sully said. "Give it time."

"Mrs. Sully?" a nurse approached. "The doctor will see you now."

She tensed, whispering to Sully, "I... I don't remember ever having this kind of examination before."

He rose to go with her, "You'll be okay."

The nurse raised her hand. "You can wait here, sir."

"Please," Michaela implored. "I'd like my husband to be with me."

"I'll have to ask Dr. Bailey," she walked away.

"Thanks," Sully smiled.

"For what?" she was curious.

"For wantin' me with ya," he returned.

"I assume you've done this before," she turned up the corner of her mouth.

The nurse returned, frowning, "The doctor said it would be all right, but he wants Mr. Sully to stay out of the way."

"I will," Sully pledged.

The nurse escorted them to an examining room, where they were soon joined by the physician.

"I'm Dr. Charles Bailey," he introduced himself as he sat at his desk. "Mr. and Mrs. Sully, when is your baby due?"

"May," she responded.

"And are you experiencing any difficulty?" he jotted down some notes.

Sully spoke up, "We were in that train crash night before last."

"My goodness," he shook his head. "From what I read, it's a miracle anyone survived."

"This baby is a miracle, too," Michaela spoke up. "And I want to insure that it is unharmed."

"Of course," he agreed. "I'll check thoroughly."

Michaela added, "I should tell you, I'm a physician, Dr. Bailey."

"I see," he had a slight disapproving tone.

Michaela was led behind a screen. Sully leaned sideways to see if he could discern what was happening. He heard the low conversation of Dr. Bailey and Michaela. Then he stood up to pace. What was taking so long?

Finally, Dr. Bailey stepped from behind the screen.

"Your wife will be with you in a moment," the physician sat at his desk and continued his notes.
"Is she all right?" Sully gulped. "Is the baby okay?"

"They're both fine," he nodded. "But your wife informs me that she is suffering from amnesia."

"She's startin' t' remember a few things," Sully noted.

"How long do you intend to stay in Philadelphia?" he paused in his writing.

"We're attendin' her medical college reunion t'morrow," Sully said. "We'll be goin' home the day after that. Will it be okay for her t' travel?"

"As long as she gets plenty of rest," he asserted.

"I guarantee she will," Sully pledged.

Michaela approached them, "Thank you, Dr. Bailey. How much do I owe you?"

He did some calculations and showed her the sum. Before she could open her purse, Sully dug deep into his pocket and produced the cash.

"Wait," Bailey looked up. "The newspaper described the efforts of a woman doctor who tended to the injured at the scene of the train wreck. That was you?"

Michaela nodded.

Bailey glanced at the cash and handed it back, "No charge. Professional courtesy."

************

"I'll get us a carriage," Sully looked up and down the street.

"No, let's walk," she requested.

"But it's real cold," he observed.

"We won't venture too far," she smiled.

The chill in the air prompted them to stroll closer to one another. Michaela described in layman's terms what Dr. Bailey had told her regarding the baby.

"So, everythin's normal," he was relieved.

"Quite normal," she assured. "He asked about the scar to the side of my abdomen. Was that...."

"Where you were stabbed," he completed the thought. Sully stopped, "Please, Michaela. If there's somethin' wrong.... if this is too dangerous for ya...."

"We're fine, Sully," she assured.

"Was the examination.... ya know.... too uncomfortable?" he probed.

"I won't say that I liked it," she admitted. "But I simply told myself that I had been through it before."

"Wanna go in there?" he gestured toward a building they had approached.

"The Museum of Art," she read the sign. "Would you like to go in?"
He consented, "Sure."

They entered and silently walked through the halls, admiring the displays of industrial art.

"I guess I was expectin' paintin's like we saw in Boston," he noted.

"You've been to Boston?" she paused.

"A few times," he answered.

She became quiet. Sully reasoned that she was attempting to recall.

He began to fill her in, "First time was when you went back t' see your Ma when she was sick. You an' the kids were gone such a long time, I got worried ya wouldn't come back."

"Why wouldn't I have come home to you?" she was puzzled.

"It was before I told ya how I felt about ya," he explained. "You met a doctor who was treatin' Elizabeth. His name is William Burke."

Sully hesitated to see if there was any recognition of his name. There was none.

He resumed, "It wasn't too long before William wanted t' marry ya."

"Marry me?" her eyes widened.

"It seemed t' me you were considerin' his offer, so I...." he was interrupted.

"You left," she finished his thought.

"You remember?" he searched her eyes.

Her brow wrinkled, "I.... I went to the depot.... found you on the train."

"Do you remember what I said when ya asked me why I'd come t' Boston?" he waited.

Her eyes saddened, "I.... don't...." Then there was a hint of recollection, "You said.... because you love me."

Sully's face lit up, "You remembered, Michaela."

He rubbed her back, and they continued on until she spoke again, "On what other occasions did we go to Boston?"

"We went back when Katie was two," he remembered. "Then again after her...."

He stopped himself.

"What?" Michaela wondered.

Sully related, "Josef was real small, an' he was in Boston t' have surgery on his throat. Your Ma was takin' care of him."

"Why was Mother taking care of him?" she posed the question.

Sully took a deep breath, "Cause we were lookin' for Katie. She'd been kidnapped."
"Kidnapped!" she was horrified. "Sully, why do we live in such a place?"

"Because we love the land," he answered simply.

"Shootings, stabbings, kidnappings," she shook her head. "It sounds much too dangerous."

"You sayin' you don't wanna live there anymore?" he became defensive.

"It seems to me that our children would be much safer here in the East," she asserted.

He sighed in frustration.

Michaela's tone softened, "We... don't disagree very often, do we?"

He smiled at her expression, "Not very."

She assessed her emotions, "I don't like it when we do."

"Me neither," he returned.

"Mother didn't want me to move west," she told him. "We had a terrible argument over it. She told me I was stubborn and willful. She said I should stay in Boston and find a suitable match."

Sully nodded, "But you wanted t' go where folks wanted your services as a physician."

"Did they accept me in Colorado Springs?" she struggled to recall.

"Only a few folks at first," he replied.

"You?" she turned up the corner of her mouth.

He grinned, "I knew you were a healer when ya saved the life of Black Kettle, the great leader of the Cheyenne," he revealed. "He gave you the name 'Medicine Woman.'"

Her expression changed, "Why does that remind me of a feather?"

"You used a feather t' help him breathe while ya removed a bullet from his neck," Sully informed her.

Her shoulders slumped.

"What's wrong?" Sully observed her demeanor.

She confessed, "With only fragments of my memory...."

He wondered why she stopped, "What Michaela?"

She felt her emotions building, "I feel so alone. It's like being adrift in a vast sea, and no matter which way I look, I catch only glimpses of the shore. When I start to swim toward it, it vanishes."

"You're not alone," he touched her arm.

She warmed at his gesture.

Sully guided her toward the exit, "Let's go back t' the hotel. I promised Dr. Bailey you'd get lots o' rest."

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Chapter 5
Sully sat on the floor by the fireplace of their hotel room as Michaela slept. It was only noon, but the temperature was too cold to enjoy the outdoors. He glanced over his shoulder at his wife. Then he returned his gaze to the dancing flames of the fire.

After several minutes, he felt her warm hand on his shoulder.

"May I join you?" Michaela bid.

"I thought you were asleep," he helped her down beside him.

"I was, for a while," she sighed. "Then I began to dream."

"About what?" he was curious.

"Many things," she rubbed her temple.

"Here," Sully positioned himself so that her back was to him.

He began to massage her shoulders.

"That feels wonderful," she closed her eyes.

He longed to kiss her, but dared not.

Michaela felt a strange desire building within her. She wanted Sully to kiss her, but she dared not ask. Though she knew he was her husband, she was uncertain about how to behave around him.

"Have we sat by a fire like this often?" she sensed.

"Yep," he smiled. "I built three fireplaces in our house.... includin' one in our bedroom."

"Strange," she turned to face him. "It reminds me of poetry."

"Michaela," he clasped her hands. "I like t' recite poetry t' ya."

"You do?" her eyes brightened.

Her gorgeous eyes, he thought. They melted his heart.

"Annie has your eyes," he spoke softly.

"Brown and green?" she was pleased.

"You gave me such beautiful children, Michaela," his heart filled.

"Could you.... would you recite some of that poetry to me?" she requested.

He cleared his throat, then peered into the eyes he adored:

"Soul, heart, and body, we thus singly name,
Are not in love divisible and distinct,
But each with each inseparably link'd.
One is not honour, and the other shame,
But burn as closely fused as fuel, heat, and flame."
Her cheeks flushed, "That's.... very provocative."

He toyed with a stray strand of her hair, "It was Alfred Austin. I hope ya don't mind.... that it's provocative."

"I cannot imagine that I.... that is.... I'm somewhat...." she was flustered.

"I didn't mean t' embarrass you," he looked at her with concern.

She tensed, "Do I like that sort of thing?"

"What sort of thing?" he wondered.

"Things that.... stimulate one's.... emotions," her cheeks reddened further.

"You.... we.... like stimulatin' our emotions," he was frank.

She took a deep breath, hoping to calm her heartbeat, "I never imagined I would...."

Sully smiled, "You're a passionate woman, Michaela. Ya kept it hidden for a lot o' years, but.... well, once you an' me got t'gether, that passion carried over int' our marriage."

"I.... see," she was still flustered.

"Maybe...." he hesitated.

"Maybe what?" she asked.

"Maybe if we kissed, you might remember," he proposed.

"But you said...." she stopped.

"I'm willin' t' experiment, if it helps ya," he offered.

"I.... I suppose that would be all right," she mellowed. "For experimental purposes."

She sat up stiffly and closed her eyes.

Sully cupped her cheek tenderly, then leaned forward. Their lips met briefly, without parting.

"Anythin'?" he inquired.

Her eyes remained closed, "No. I'm afraid not."

"Look at me," he encouraged.

She opened her eyes, "Why?"

"'Cause I want ya t' see what's in my heart," his eyes gleamed adoringly.

She felt a shiver. He guided her hand to touch the center of his chest.

His voice was raspy, "No matter what you remember or don't remember about us, I will love you all my days."

His words penetrated something deep within her soul and prompted a flash of memory.

They were in some sort of primitive structure which was covered in
animal hide. He was shirtless, his torso shining with perspiration.

She felt her heart race, "You asked me to marry you."

"An' you said yes," he smiled that she remembered.

"Then we kissed," she spoke breathlessly.

Slowly, Sully drew her closer. Their mouths met again, this time, more urgently, more passionately. Lips parted, exploring, savoring. Michaela was becoming dizzy from the intensity of the connection.

Sully sensed he was losing control and broke it off. But not until there was one more soft kiss.

She attempted to calm herself, "I'm terribly sorry. You must think I'm some sort of...."

He interrupted, "You didn't do anythin' wrong, Michaela. The kiss, the intense feelin'.... that's what it's like for us."

He watched her, attempting to gauge her feelings. She was clearly bothered.

Then a serene expression crossed her face, one of realization, "I.... I think I'm beginning to understand."

"Understand?" he was uncertain.

"What we have," she identified. "It's incredibly special."

"Sure is," he grinned.

"It's why I stayed in Colorado, isn't it?" she presumed.

"I like t' think so," he nodded. "But I know ya gotta be wonderin' how a woman like you could love a man like me. We're so different."

"I don't wonder why I love you," she interrupted. "For some inexplicable reason, it's the only thing that makes sense in this world of darkness in which I've found myself."

"You know you love me?" he smiled.

Caressing her belly, she added, "And it helps me understand why I.... we wanted this little one."

"Ya do?" his grin widened.

"I never imagined I could have children, Sully," she confessed. "Growing up, I wasn't like my sisters. They attended cotillions and courted handsome men. I preferred to stay with father, learning about medicine."

"A tomboy?" he teased.

"My sisters called me that," she mused.

"You're the most beautiful tomboy I ever saw," he complimented.

Her heart fluttered at his words, "I didn't understand their desire to do things most women do because I was too busy trying to succeed in a man's world."
"You found time for David," he reminded.

"Mother encouraged the match," she revealed. "I think on some level, she thought it would bring out my maternal instincts. But the truth is, it frightens me... the idea of motherhood."

"It did," he put it in the past tense. "We had a lot o' talks before Katie was born. But you're a wonderful mother. Our kids adore ya."

"I... never dreamed I could give birth, nurture a baby," she shook her head.

"You did it perfect every time," he smiled. "Even though it was a challenge with the twins."

She fought to recollect, "I can't imagine taking care of so many."

"Bridget helps," he said.

"Bridget?" she tilted her head.

"Our nanny an' housekeeper," he identified. "Your Ma brought her out when the twins were born."

"Our children have a nanny?" she was puzzled.

"More like a friend," he clarified. "She's special."

"How old is she?" Michaela felt a hint of jealousy.

Sully teased, "Let's see, she's in her mid-twenties... with fiery red hair and blue eyes... and her figure...."

"Sully!" she interrupted. "Do you... feel something for this woman?"

He chuckled and raised her hand to his lips, "I only feel somethin' for the woman right in front of me."

She was relieved.

Sully explained, "Bridget's more like a grandma t' the kids, especially since...."

He stopped.

"Since what?" she wanted to know.

"Michaela," he swallowed hard. "Maybe that's enough for now."

Her brow creased, "My mother is their grandmother. Is there something about her that...."

He knew he had gone too far to turn back, "She took sick, a little more than a year ago."

Sensing the worst, she felt a lump in her throat, and tears began to well in her eyes.

"Her heart just gave out," he spoke softly.

"Oh, Sully," she leaned on his shoulder. "My final words to her were so cruel."

"No they weren't," he comforted. "You an' your Ma made peace. You were there with her in Boston. She admired you, Michaela. An' she gave her blessin' by leavin' money for you t' build a hospital in Colorado Springs."

She wept softly for her mother's passing. Sully stroked her back and kissed her temple. To Michaela, it had just happened, and he regretted having to tell her.
Finally, she began to compose herself. Sully framed her face in his hands and wiped the tears. Sweetly, he kissed her temple.

"I know you're here," she paused. "But I feel so alone.... so lost at this moment."

"When ya lose a parent, that's how ya feel," he spoke from his heart.

"Your parents," she suddenly thought. "Are they gone?"

"Yea," he was brief.

"I'm sorry," she sympathized.

"Life goes on," he touched her abdomen.

"Have we discussed a name for this baby?" she found herself wondering.

"No," Sully answered. "But you got a strong feelin' it's a girl."

"Does that bother you?" she wondered.

"Does what bother me?" he was puzzled.

"Having daughters," she clarified. "My father always...."

"I love our girls," he interjected. "They remind me of their Ma."

She shook her head in amazement, "I can't tell you how connected I feel to you, Sully. It's as if...."

He completed her sentence, "We're one heart.... one soul."

"And yet, I have no memory of our meeting.... our wedding.... our life together," she sighed.

"You will," he assured. "But for now, I want ya t' get some more rest."

************

Michaela awoke and yawned. She sat up and looked about the hotel room. Sully was not there. With a rush of anxiety, she wondered where he could be. Then she spotted a note he had left on the stand beside the bed.

"Michaela," she read aloud. "I went to send a wire to Colorado Springs. I want our family to know we're okay in case they read about the train wreck. I'll be back shortly. Love, Sully."

She sighed in relief. She sat up and ran her palms around the mound where her baby was growing. In a short time, she had become more accustomed to the feel of her body there. And she was continuing to remember bits and pieces of her past. But it was not nearly enough to satisfy her curiosity. She felt a tear on her cheek and reached for her purse.

While searching its contents for a handkerchief, she discovered a folded piece of paper. Opening it, she read:

"Dear Mama,

I hope you have a nice visit in Phildelfia. I promise to do my chores and to help Miss Bridget with Joey, Annie and Noah. Watch over Poppy. Please come home safe to us as soon as you can. Love, Katie."

Beneath her daughter's name were neatly drawn the the letters "JOSEF" in a different handwriting. Below that were
some scribbles, which she assumed were those of the twins. Her heart melted at the thoughtfulness of her daughter. Then tears flowed anew.

"Katie," she whispered. "My Katie."

A flash of memory hit her. She was in the kitchen. Sully caught her attention as he set the little girl on the floor and let go of her hands. Katie was taking her first steps.

"I remember, Sweetheart," Michaela wiped the moisture beneath her eyes.

Her head began to hurt. Stepping to her medical bag, she opened it and withdrew the strange envelopes of herbs. She set them in neat rows on the desktop. One was marked "Willow Bark," another "Stinging Nettle." There was "Yarrow" and "Dandelion," along with others. She shook her head, unable to identify their uses.

Sighing, Michaela decided to wash up. She rang for service, and soon the staff had prepared a bath for her.

As she lowered herself into the soothing liquid, another memory flashed before her. She was sitting in a tub, rubbing tears from her cheeks as she longed to tell Sully how broken-hearted she was. The memory passed. Suddenly, she wondered what could be keeping her husband. It should not have taken him so long to send a telegram.

************

As Sully stepped into the room, he was immediately hit by the steamy fragrance of lilac. In the corner of the room, Michaela was asleep in the tub. He smiled at the scene. After carefully hiding the wrapped package he had obtained in the bottom of their trunk, he tossed his jacket onto the bed and went to his wife.

He knelt beside the tub and spoke low, "You're gonna turn int' a prune."

She did not stir.

He touched her arm, "Michaela."

She awoke with a start and instinctively covered herself, "What do you think you're doing?"

"I'm sorry," he pulled back. "It's just.... well, you were asleep, an' I thought...."

"You thought what?" she sounded offended. "That you would take advantage of me?"

Her accusation stung him, "No, Michaela. I'd never do that."

"Then back up and turn away," she directed.

Sully obliged. He could hear her rise from the tub.
"Don't look," she added.

He smiled as he could see her reflection in the mirror, "I won't."

Once she had donned her robe, she began to relax, "All right. You can turn around now."

When he did, she saw the smirk on his face.

"What are you smiling at?" she was still offended.

"Nothin'," he shrugged.

"Then take that look off...." she stopped herself as a flash of memory hit her. "We were in the woods.... looking for the source of tainted water.... my wrist.... I couldn't do up my buttons."

He acknowledged, "I didn't take advantage of you then either."

Her tone softened, "I'm sorry I was curt with you. I know you wouldn't do anything improper."

"That's okay," he accepted.

"I have a confession to make," she offered.

"What?" he was curious.

"When the railroad company put us on that train to come here...." she paused. "I.... was sleeping."

"No, ya weren't," he grinned.

"How do you know?" she was surprised.

"You were watchin' me get dressed," Sully informed her.

"I.... I didn't.... that is.... why did you stand there like that.... without anything on, if you knew I was watching you?" she turned it around.

His smile broadened, "I thought it might help ya remember a little more about me."

"Byron Sully!" she was mortified.

"I got a confession, too," he was compelled to tell her.

"You saw me in the mirror just now," she realized.

"Uh-huh," he smiled. "An' last night.... when you were gettin' ready for bed."

"I suppose.... there is a natural curiosity about that sort of thing," she admitted. "But.... it wasn't proper for me to look."

"We're married," he assured. "We're not doin' anythin' improper."

Her look indicated her discomfort.

Sully glanced at the clock on the mantel, "We best get dressed for the opera. Alfredo an' Violetta won't wait for us."
"You're familiar with the characters?" she was amazed.

"We've seen this opera a couple o' times," he nodded.

The thought occurred to her, "What took you so long to send the telegram?"

He masked the truth, "I was just lookin' around the hotel."

She took a deep breath, "I'm truly looking forward to the opera tonight."

"An' tomorrow, your reunion," he smiled.

"Oh no, Sully," she froze with apprehension. "What will they think of me? I have so few memories of the past thirteen years. I can't possibly attend."

************
Chapter 6
************

Sully suggested, "Michaela, ya gotta attend your reunion. You don't wanna miss out on seein' everyone. Just tell 'em the truth about your memory. As medical professionals, they'll understand."

She lifted her hand to her head and rubbed it.

"Is somethin' comin' to ya?" he wondered.

"No," she sighed. "My head has been aching since I woke up from my nap."

"Let me see your pupils," he led her to the lamp.

"Are they dilated?" she wondered.

"No," he assured. "But maybe I should fetch Dr. Bailey."

"It's not serious," she sighed. "I've just been trying so hard to recall everything."

"Tell ya what," he advised. "Don't try t' remember anythin' the rest of the night. Let's just sit back an' enjoy the opera."

"It's hard to enjoy when Violetta is dying," she frowned.

"Now, why'd ya spoil it for me?" he sounded disappointed.

"I thought you said we've seen this opera before," she defended.

"You think I was lookin' at the stage?" he retorted.

"Sully," her cheeks flushed.

"I'm just kiddin'," he smiled.

"I nearly forgot to tell you," her eyes brightened. "I remembered something about Katie while you were out."

"What about her?" he smiled.

"Her first step," she specified. "We were in the kitchen, and you got my attention so she could walk to me."

"That's real good, Michaela," he felt a lump in his throat.
As Michaela and Sully waited in the lobby for an usher to escort them to their seats, a familiar face approached.

"Michaela!" it was her classmate Miriam Tilson. "It's so good to see you. And you, Sully."

Michaela embraced her.

"I'm so glad you came," Miriam smiled. "When you wrote me that you planned to attend, I knew I had to as well."

"Is your husband here?" Sully asked.

"Yes," her expression changed. "He's complaining about the location of our seats."

"How are you feeling, Michaela?" the friend observed her quiet. "It must have been rather uncomfortable traveling across the country in your condition."

Michaela nodded, "It was a very difficult trip."

"Miriam," Sully explained. "We were in that train wreck, an' Michaela hit her head pretty hard. She's been havin' some trouble with her memory."

"My goodness," Miriam took her hands. "How terrible for you.... amnesia.... do you have any memories?"

"Yes," Michaela answered. "Everything up to my moving to Colorado Springs. After that, only small fragments."

Her eyes widened, "Why, that's been over ten years ago!"

"I know," Michaela sighed.

Sully perceived his wife's angst, "I reckon we'll see more of you t'morrow, Miriam. We best get to our seats now."

"Yes," Miriam hugged Michaela again. "We have lots of catching up to do."

The woman departed, and they entered the theater. After being seated, Sully perused the program, but Michaela seemed preoccupied.

"Your head still hurt?" he noticed.

"No," she turned her attention to him.

"What's on your mind?" he queried.

"Miriam said we'll catch up on things," Michaela felt her emotions building. "Sully, I don't know what to tell her."

"Shh," he slid his chair closer to hers. "Miriam's your friend, even though...."

She wondered why he stopped, "Though what?"

He revealed, "She came t' visit us when you were expectin' Katie. Through her letters over the years, she'd led ya t' believe that she was an important doctor at a fancy San Francisco hospital. Turns out, she made it all up. She hasn't practiced medicine since she graduated."

"Why not?" she was shocked.
"Her husband," Sully detailed. "He made her choose between a career in medicine or their marriage."

She fell silent.

"You okay?" he hoped.

"I was just thinking..." she hesitated.

He read her mind, "I never asked ya t' choose."

She smiled.

************

During the opera, Sully rarely took his eyes off his wife. She seemed lost in the beautiful Verdi music.

Michaela felt each emotion of the characters. Never before had she watched a performance of her favorite opera with such empathy.

During each intermission, she chatted with Sully about the costumes, sets and vocal talents of the cast. He was glad that she was taking his advice and simply enjoying the performance without attempting to remember her past.

Near the end of the final act, he glanced down at the pocket watch she had given him for their fourth wedding anniversary. He turned it over to read the inscription "To my husband-Byron Sully. My love for all time. Michaela."

She noticed, "May I see it?"

He held the watch closer for her to read. Then she ran her finger across the words. Reaching out to clasp his hand, she continued to watch the opera.

When at last it concluded, Michaela drew a handkerchief from her purse. Sully mused at the reaction she always had to the ending. But the last time they had been in Philadelphia and watched it, a night of passion between them had followed.

He sighed wistfully to himself.

"What are you thinking?" she donned her cape.

"Just how cold it's gonna be t'night," Sully helped her bundle up.

************

Back in their hotel room, Michaela's enthusiasm about the opera continued, "Oh, Sully, it was wonderful. Thank you so much for taking me."

"You're welcome," he was happy to see her in such good spirits.

She proceeded to go on about each scene, nuance of the cast's voices and portrayals of the tragic characters. He silently absorbed her words, wondering if her rapid speech was masking something else.

"I'm sorry," she stopped herself, nearly out of breath. "I haven't let you get in a word about what you thought."
"It was real good," he answered politely. "You think you'll settle down t' get some sleep soon?"

"I was just thinking I should rest," she turned her back to him. "Could you help me with my locket?"

When Sully reached to unlatch it, his hands brushed her skin. She was warm, and her perfume filled his senses. Then he realized which locket she was wearing. By coincidence, it was the gift he had given her on their fourth anniversary.

"Thank you," Michaela accepted it into her hands.

Suddenly, her posture changed. She noticed the inscription on the jewelry: "To Michaela-Beloved wife and mother-May 1874." Inside were portraits of Sully and Katie.

She faced him with a quizzical expression, "I don't...."

"It's okay," he forced a smile.

"Tell me," she requested.

He took a deep breath, discouraged that she was destined to have only fragments of her memory return.

"We were in Washington for the weddin' of President Grant's daughter," he began.

"How on earth did we know the President?" her eyes widened.

"We met him on another trip east," he mentioned. "We found out some real special news on that trip."

Michaela considered for a moment, then recalled, "We found out I was pregnant.... with Josef."

As Michaela continued to admire the locket, Sully hung up his jacket, tie and vest. He undid the top buttons of his shirt, then removed his shoes.

Finally, he walked to the chair by the bed, plopped down and slouched back, "We best get t' sleep. There's a busy day t'morrow."

Michaela was puzzled at his change of subject.

"Sully," she observed his demeanor. "Aren't you happy that I remembered more?"

"'Course I am," he nodded.

"Are you going to sleep in your formal trousers?" she noticed. "They'll become quite wrinkled."

"I can't sleep the way I usually do," he closed his eyes.

"How do you usually...." she halted at the realization of his meaning. "Oh."

He opened an eye to look at her, "I'm fine like this. Thanks."

She pivoted and went to the closet to change.

Within seconds she returned to him, "I'm having trouble with the buttons on my dress. Could you help?"

He sat up and silently undid them for her. She returned to the closet to slip into her nightgown, then to brush her hair. When finished, she climbed into bed. It seemed much larger to her without him in it.

Inexplicably, Michaela's thoughts turned to Sully's revelation that he slept unclothed. She found it strangely exciting.
but was embarrassed that it came to her mind. She supposed it would not be uncommon... for someone who had not lived in civilization. Yet, Sully seemed comfortable in civilized society, too.

Curiosity prompted her, "Do I usually sleep like this?"

Sully opened an eye again, "Like what?"

"In a nightgown," she specified. "I suppose I must, if I packed them."

"You usually start out in one," he admitted. "An' ya keep it near the bed in case one o' the kids needs ya."

"So, I don't always wear it.... while I'm sleeping, that is," she felt awkward.

"Not always," he closed his eyes again.

She rose from the bed and unfolded the extra blanket at the bottom of the bed.

Sully felt her drape it across him.

"You'll be cold without this," she explained before returning to the bed.

He propped his legs up on the side of the bed and arranged the blanket snugly around himself.

"Are you warm enough?" she hoped.

"Yes," he shut his eyes again. "Thanks."

Michaela noticed a magazine on the bedside stand and opened it to read.

Sully opened his eyes again, "You gonna leave the lamp on?"

"I was going to read," she set the journal aside. "But I can lower the lamp, if you prefer."

"Go ahead an' read," he closed his eyes. "It's okay."

She was feeling more alone. Why did he seem suddenly different? Distant. Had she said or done something to offend him?

"Sully," her voice cracked. "I'm trying. I'm truly trying to remember everything about us. Please, don't give up on me."

"Michaela," he was disturbed at her tone. "I'll never give up on ya."

He rushed to her side.

Her eyes reddened, "Then why are you acting so cool toward me?"

"I'm sorry," he embraced her. "I didn't think I...."

"What's bothering you?" she questioned.

Reluctantly, he confessed, "It's just.... I miss ya so much. I got ya right here beside me, but...."

"But I'm not the wife you had," she knew.

"I don't wanna pressure ya," he confessed. "But it's all I can do t' stay away from ya."
"Were we frequently.... together?" she tensed.

He felt it, and drew back.

She tentatively clasped his hand for encouragement, but he could not look her in the eye. Tenderly, she raised his chin to gaze at her.

"Tell me," she encouraged.

"We are.... were frequently.... t'gether," he admitted. "More frequently than most married folks, I reckon."

Her logical mind reasoned, "I suppose so many pregnancies should come as no surprise then. So, when I've been in a family way, we've no doubt had to refrain from...."

"We get t'gether.... even when you're pregnant," he revealed. "Until it becomes uncomfortable for ya."

Her cheeks flushed, but she did not object to his frankness.

"Would you.... tell me about our wedding?" she was curious.

He smiled, "You were so beautiful, Michaela. I was the luckiest man in the world."

She concentrated with all her might.

Then a memory flashed before her, "You wore an Indian ceremonial top. We danced and danced."

"I ain't much good at it," he confessed.

"But you do it for me," she smiled. "I love the...."

"Waltz," he grinned.

"Tell me more," she invited.

They leaned back against the iron posts of the bed, still holding hands.

"Your Ma, Rebecca an' Marjorie were there," he stopped.

He was not ready to tell her about the death of her sister.

"They came all the way from Boston?" she was pleased.
"Your Ma tried t' run everythin'," he sighed. "You wanted her t' walk ya down the aisle, but she refused at first."

"It sounds rather unconventional for her," she retorted.

"The whole town was there," he resumed. "Cloud Dancin' was my best man."

"Who was my matron of honor?" she did not recall.

"Rebecca an' our friend Dorothy," he noted.

"Two?" her eyes widened.

"There was a lot o' compromisin' that day," he joked.

"Go on," she encouraged.

"After the reception, we boarded a train for Denver," he informed her. "Turns out, Brian an' his conductor friend John had turned the whole car int' a honeymoon suite for us, bed included."

She closed her eyes and envisioned something, "You hand crafted our bed. It has feather designs etched on the headboard."

He recalled vividly, "You were real nervous. I lowered the shades as the train pulled out."

"I thought we should at least wait until dark," she seemed mesmerized.

Sully whispered, "We kissed."

"And kissed," her breathing quickened.

Now they were facing one another.

She peered into his eyes, "I didn't know if I could...."

"We took it nice an' slow," he recounted.

She closed her eyes, transported by the timbre of his voice.

Sully caressed her cheek, "I love you so much, Michaela. More each day that we've been t'gether."

Her eyes watered, and Sully kissed the tears.

"If you want...." she paused. "To sleep how you.... usually do.... I wouldn't object."

He smiled, "That's real thoughtful, but.... I'll be fine like this."

"All right," she nodded.

"Thanks for the offer," he stroked her arm.

"Sully," the notion struck her. "What if I never remember it all?"

"Then...." he paused. "I'll have t' court ya all over again."

Michaela smiled, "I think I would like that."
He rose from the bed and lifted the covers for her. She scooted beneath them.

He gently touched her abdomen, then kissed her forehead, "'Night."

"Sully," she clasped his hand yet. "What would we be doing right now with our children?"

He sat on the edge of the bed, "Well.... you'd either read 'em a story, or I'd tell 'em about the Cheyenne legends. Then we'd listen t' their prayers an' tuck 'em in. Right about then, Joe would have t' use the privy. So, one of us would walk him downstairs. Then...."

He stopped. She had fallen asleep. After drawing back a lock of her hair, he kissed her forehead again. Then he turned down the lamp and made his way to the chair.

It would be a cold night.

************

Chapter 7
************

Michaela awoke at dawn. She turned to see Sully, his legs still propped up on the bed. She rose and went to the privy. When she returned, she observed her husband's position, unchanged.

Sitting at the desk and mustering all of her powers of concentration, she examined the photographs of her children. When she lifted the twins' portrait, something flashed in her mind. She remembered how small they were at birth, particularly Noah. He.... he wasn't breathing.... Sully was holding the frail infant, nearly in tears. Michaela recalled taking the child into her arms and breathing into his tiny mouth.

Suddenly, she had a vision of breathing into Sully's mouth, as well. He was lifeless on the ground. His body was bruised and....

"'Mornin'," Sully spoke behind her.

"Good morning," she looked up. "How's your back?"

"My back?" he tilted his head.

"Sleeping on the chair gives you...." she realized more of her memory was returning. "It hurts your back."

He smiled, "That's just what I tell ya so ya won't throw me outa our room."

"What?" her eyes widened.

"An' every so often, it gets me a back massage," he quipped.

"You mean you deceive me?" she pretended to be upset.

"Just a little," he winked. "For the sake of romance."

She held his gaze for a moment, then returned to the photos, "I was remembering Noah's birth.... he was blue...."

"You saved his life," he nodded.

"Then I remembered seeing you on the ground," her brow
"I was trying to get you to breathe."

He rubbed her back, "You saved my life, too. Fact is, ya saved most everyone in Colorado Springs."

"Sully, it just occurred to me that my medical knowledge at this moment is antiquated," she realized. "I have no memory of the latest developments or techniques."

"If I know you, you'll stay up late every night until ya catch up," he smiled.

"But first, I want to catch up on us.... on the children," she insisted. She was unsure of where to begin, "I seem to remember a little more about Katie, but.... Josef. Tell me about him."

He chuckled, "He exasperates us at times. But he's got a heart as big as all outdoors. He always tells us what's on his mind, an' he's real sensitive.... especially about you an' me goin' away."

"When we came to Boston.... to bring him home. He didn't react. He.... was...."

Tears filled her eyes.

"Oh, Sully," her heart ached. "We were gone for so long.... he hardly recognized us."

"He recognized us," Sully assured. "But he didn't know why we went away. We guided him back t' us, Michaela. He's fine now. Ya never know what he's gonna do next. Plus, he enjoys bein' a big brother.... always findin' ways t' entertain the twins."

She fell silent.

"Any more questions?" he anticipated.

"No," she absorbed his description.

************

With Sully at her side, Michaela anxiously entered the reunion hall. There were tables of hors d'oeuvre and beverages, along with dining tables and rows of seats for the speakers who were to come. Michaela recognized a few of her professors and most of her classmates. Sully stood by silently, as she greeted each and introduced him as her husband.

She seemed in her element until discussion turned to her current life. At that point, she would tensely change the subject or excuse herself to greet another friend.

Finally, Michaela spotted Miriam and went to her.

"How are you doing today?" Miriam questioned.

"I'm fine," she acknowledged.

"Here," Miriam guided her to a table. "Let's sit down."

"I'm gonna get us somethin' t' eat," Sully excused himself.

"Sully?" Michaela looked apprehensive.
"I'll be right back," he touched her shoulder.

The two friends began to reminisce about their school days. In no time, Michaela was at ease. Miriam updated Michaela on her children and their activities.

"It sounds like they are doing quite well," Michaela remarked politely.

At that moment, Sully set a plate of food before his wife. She looked up in appreciation, then began to consume its contents.

He turned to Miriam, "So when are we gonna meet Robert?"

"He'll be arriving shortly," Miriam answered. "There was some problem with our train tickets home, and he went to have it out with the railroad."

Miriam returned to the topic of her children, as Michaela continued to eat.

Finally, curious about Michaela's children, she commented, "You mentioned in your last letter that Matthew got married last Thanksgiving."

Michaela tensed.

Sully came to her rescue, "Yep. It was a real nice weddin'."

"And it must be wonderful to have Colleen and her husband there to help with your soon-to-open hospital," Miriam continued.

Michaela looked down, embarrassed.

Sully spoke in her place, "Colleen's made us proud. She's a compassionate doctor just like her Ma. An' the hospital should be done not long after we return."

Michaela grew more upset at herself. She was incapable of answering the simplest questions about her family and career.

Miriam touched her hand, "I'm sorry, Michaela. I shouldn't have asked." Then she spotted her husband, "Oh, there's Robert."

Their attention turned to the well dressed mustached man who entered the room. He was handsome, with graying temples and dark eyes.

"Darling," Miriam kissed her husband's cheek. "I'd like to introduce my dearest friend from medical school, Dr. Michaela Quinn."

The man acknowledged, "A pleasure to meet you."

Miriam added, "And this is her husband, Byron Sully."

Sully stood and offered his hand, "Pleased t' meet ya."

Robert hesitated, then shook his hand, "I pictured the husband of Miriam's friend differently."

Michaela tilted her head, "Why is that?"

"More refined," he glanced around the room. "When do the speakers commence?"
"Robert," Miriam lowered her volume. "You're embarrassing me."

"Nonsense, my dear," he dismissed. "Surely, Michaela and Byron are accustomed to such reactions when they venture to a large city."

"Large or small, there's no excuse for rudeness," Michaela's cheeks flushed.

"I beg your pardon?" Robert frowned.

Miriam intervened, "Darling, Michaela sustained a blow to her head in the recent train wreck in western Pennsylvania. She's suffering from amnesia."

"I'm sorry to hear that," he sounded less than sincere.

He began to read the schedule of events. Sully watched him, already building a dislike of the man.

"I'm so excited to hear Elizabeth Blackwell speak," Miriam's eyes lit up. "Did you know she made the trip from England just for this purpose?"

"No," Michaela shook her head. "I didn't know."

"Even Robert is interested in hearing her," Miriam smiled at her husband.

"She's had an interesting life, I suppose," he added blandly.

"Michaela and Sully are expecting their fifth child," Miriam told her husband.

He offered, "Congratulations."

Sully gauged Michaela's reaction to the man, then touched his wife's hand, "I think we'll find some seats, if you'll excuse us."

Michaela was grateful for the excuse to leave them. When they found two seats on the aisle, Sully shook his head.

"What a pompous...." he was interrupted.

"Miriam left medicine for him," Michaela's brow wrinkled. "It only makes me further appreciate what I have."

He smiled at the compliment.

Then she requested, "Sully, would you mind if we leave after we listen to Dr. Blackwell?"

"Leave?" he grew concerned. "Don't ya feel all right?"

"Just tired," she looked around the room.

"Sure," he consented. "We can leave whenever ya want."

Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell was introduced to a rousing round of applause. She began to detail her life and career for this gathering of women who had found inspiration in her accomplishments. Interested in medicine because there were no female physicians in America, she was of the opinion that many women would rather consult with a female, rather than a male, about their intimate health concerns.

"I wrote at the time, 'I felt more determined than ever to become a physician, and thus place a strong barrier between me and all ordinary marriage. I must have something to engross my thoughts, some object in life which will fill this vacuum"
and prevent this sad wearing away of the heart."

With a gleam in her eye, she detailed, "After being rejected by 29 medical schools, I was finally accepted in 1847. It was quite difficult at the time, but I knew I could do it. My application arrived at Geneva Medical College in New York, and everyone believed it was a practical joke. They accepted me by accident. When it was discovered that I was serious, both townspeople and students were horrified. The male students ostracized me, and professors denied permission for me to attend medical demonstrations. However, when I graduated in 1849, I finished first in my class."

She was interrupted by applause.

When the audience stilled, she resumed. Blackwell told them how she became the first woman to qualify as a doctor in the United States, and more than 20,000 people turned out to watch the awarding of her medical degree.

With each mention of her accomplishments, the crowd grew more energized. Sully observed Michaela with interest. Her melancholy seemed to be lifting as she listened to the inspiring woman.

Blackwell practiced medicine in Paris and London for a time, then returned to the United States, only to further experience gender discrimination. She told of writing her book "The Laws of Life: With Special Reference to the Physical Education of Girls."

Michaela leaned over to whisper to Sully, "I read it when I was a girl. I found it truly inspiring."

He smiled.

Blackwell came back to America and, with others, established the New York Infirmary for Women and Children. She campaigned for improved hygiene and sanitation. During the Civil War, she founded the Women's Central Association of Relief to train nurses. She and her sister, also a physician, founded a medical college for women in New York and taught there for a time.

"She sounds as tireless as you," Sully grinned.

"I cannot imagine a list of achievements such as hers," Michaela was in awe.

In 1869, Blackwell moved to London to help form the National Health Society and the London School of Medicine for Women, and in 1875, she assumed the position of professor of gynecology at the London School of Medicine for Children.

In her closing remarks, Blackwell encouraged the women, "A blank wall of social and professional antagonism faces the woman physician that forms a situation of singular and painful loneliness, leaving her without support, respect or professional counsel. But I tell you this. If society will not admit [the rightness] of woman's free development, then society must be remodeled."

The audience was on its feet, and the applause mounted. Humbly, Blackwell accepted the good wishes of the crowd.

"Sully," Michaela touched his arm. "I'd love to meet her."

"Go wait in line," he gestured. "I need t' do somethin', but I'll join ya shortly."
"What do you need to do?" she was curious.

"You'll see," he winked.

Michaela chatted politely with other women who were waiting to meet the doctor. Just as she was about to reach Blackwell, Sully returned, an object in his hand.

"What's that?" she pointed.

"Dr. Blackwell's book," he handed it to her.

"Where did it come from?" she questioned.

"I bought it," he noted. "I thought maybe she could sign it for ya."

"Oh, Sully," her heart warmed. "Thank you."

Finally, it was Michaela's turn. She stepped forward and introduced herself and Sully.

Blackwell eyed the handsome man, "You married a female doctor, did you?"

"Sure did," Sully grinned. "I can't think of anyone I'd rather fix me up."

She chuckled, "From the looks of you, Dr. Quinn, I'd say you're carrying a girl. Is this your first?"

Michaela's cheeks flushed, "No."

Sully stated, "Our oldest daughter graduated first in her class from Harvard Medical School recently, so the medical tradition continues."

"That's marvelous!" Blackwell's eyes widened.

"I read your book as a young woman," Michaela stated. "I was wondering if you might sign a copy for me now."

"I would be honored," she accepted.

She penned, "To Dr. Michaela Quinn, for what is done or learned by one class of women becomes, by virtue of their common womanhood, the property of all women. Thank you for your contributions to womanhood. Elizabeth Blackwell."

Michaela was in awe, "It was a pleasure meeting you."

"And you," she smiled. "Good luck with your practice and with that new baby."

Sully led a speechless Michaela aside to read what the noted physician had written in her book.

"You okay?" he smiled.

"I hardly know what to say," she uttered.

"That's a switch," he teased.

Miriam approached them, "I see you met the great lady herself."

"Yes," Michaela held out the book.

Miriam read the personalized note, "I'm thrilled for you. I recall in medical school, when we would have a particularly
difficult task, you'd say, 'If Elizabeth Blackwell can do it, so can we, Miriam.'"

"I remember," Michaela chuckled.

Sully noticed that Robert was not with her. He did not inquire.

"Well, my dear," Miriam touched Michaela's shoulders. "I think it's time that your husband take you back to the hotel for some rest. I'll see you at the dinner tonight?"

"Yes," Michaela nodded. "Good bye, Miriam."

************

Back in their hotel room, Sully quickly removed his tie and loosened his shirt collar.

"You don't like dressing up, do you?" Michaela remarked.

"Nope," he took off his jacket and vest. "But I sure love lookin' at you when you're dressed up."

She blushed.

Then her expression changed, "I didn't know that Colleen was first in her class at Harvard."

He stroked her back, "I know it was hard for ya t'day. But you did fine."

Her shoulders slumped, and she sat at the vanity chair. Silently, she stared at herself in the mirror. Then she saw the reflection of Sully approaching her. He began to loosen the pins in her hair. Lifting her brush, he tenderly ran it through her auburn tresses.

"I love your hair," he spoke low.

Michaela felt strange stirrings in her body. The mere tone of his voice and the touch of his gentle hand created incredible longings in her. She felt her pulse quicken.

"Sully," she turned to face him. "What am I going to do?"

"What do ya mean?" he was puzzled.

"I feel...." she hesitated.

"Feel what?" he set the brush on the vanity.

"I feel an incredible attraction to you," she could not look him in the eye. "It embarrasses me."

He returned tenderly, "Don't be embarrassed."

"I.... I never felt this way with...." she stopped herself.

"With David?" he assumed.

"I've been taught that a woman.... shouldn't...." she sighed at her inability to communicate her feelings.

Sully stood up and extended his hand to join him. She rose from the chair. Softly, he stroked back her hair from her temples. He caressed her cheek, then slid his hand around to the nape of her neck.
Michaela swallowed hard, feeling transported by his overtures.

"Is it.... always like this for us?" she was curious.

"Always," he smiled.

Then he slid his hands around her waist and drew her form snugly against his. Michaela felt his body changing.... reacting to their proximity. She did not want to stop. Sully closed his eyes, longing just this once to feel her close. But his body was warming, aroused by the scent and feel of her against him. They were losing themselves to the physical attraction they felt. Soon it would be too late to stop.

************

Chapter 8
************

"Sully," Michaela's voice was enticing.

He took a deep breath and pulled back, "I.... I gotta go for a walk."

With that, he grabbed his coat and left the room.

A breathless Michaela was hurt and confused. She lay down on the bed and began to cry. Why did Sully leave? Had she done something wrong? Was there something she forgot to do? Soon, her rambling thoughts exhausted her, and she was asleep.

************

Sully walked as fast as he could. Then he began to run. Before long, he found himself in a park. Snow covered and pristine, the land was a sweet reminder of what they had left back home.

His heart grew heavy. Just a week ago in Colorado Springs, life was good. He was happy with the family and home he had made there. Now, without Michaela.... without her memories, he felt empty.

Then he began to feel guilty for his selfishness. He had left her, alone. It was not the first time. When feelings of helplessness overwhelmed him, he had often gone off to be alone, to seek spiritual guidance. But Michaela needed him.... just as she always needed him when she was hurt and confused.

His mind returned to the terrible guilt he felt over his months in hiding, when she lost that baby. He felt moisture beneath his eyes. Wiping his sleeve across his cheeks, he swallowed hard.

"I don't know how t' help you, Michaela," he closed his eyes.

"Mr. Sully?" it was a familiar voice.

Sully turned. There stood Miriam's husband, Robert.

"Dr. Tilson? What are you doin' out here?" Sully composed himself.

"I find a brisk walk works wonders to clear the mind," the physician answered, looking at his watch. "And you?"
"Same reason, I guess," Sully shrugged.

"I suspect there is more to it than you let on," Robert said.

"Where's Miriam?" Sully looked around.

"At the hotel, primping," he answered.

Sully was less hostile toward the man. He seemed different.

"Can I ask ya somethin'?" Sully spoke.

"Of course," he nodded.

"What do ya know about amnesia?" Sully queried.

"It's quite difficult to predict a recovery," he noted. "Is Michaela remembering things?"


Robert advised, "Mr. Sully, it could take some time before, or even if, she remembers everything."

"I see," he lowered his head.

The doctor continued, "But I have seen cases where memory was restored completely in a relatively short amount of time. Being back in her normal environment and routine, among familiar people, might help. Don't give up hope."

Sully was curious, "Why are you so different now?"

"Different?" he was puzzled.

"Back at the reunion, you.... you acted.... well, like ya didn't care for bein' here," Sully explained.

He took a deep breath and exhaled slowly, "I apologize. There are many pressures in my line of work. People do not always understand that, in particular my wife. She insisted that we attend this reunion when I have so many other things I should be doing."

"Maybe this is none o' my business, but why'd ya make her give up medicine?" Sully probed.

"Because she wanted to have children," he answered. "What sort of home would that be, if both of us were at the hospital all day?"

Sully was familiar with the argument, "Sounds like my daughter an' her husband."

"Your daughter is a physician?" he tilted his head.

"Yea," Sully folded his arms against the cold.

"With a new baby on the way, surely you can understand my position," Robert went on. "A mother is needed with her children, not traipsing around the wards of a hospital."

"Only thing I understand is that the world can use all the good doctors it can get," Sully reasoned.

Robert straightened up, "Perhaps it's different in Colorado."

"Twenty years is a long time," Sully rubbed his upper lip. "Think o' the lives Miriam might have saved."
Suddenly, he wanted to be with Michaela.

"I reckon we'll see ya at the dinner," Sully said. "I best get back t' my wife."

"Good day then," Robert looked at his watch again.

When Sully reached the street corner, he turned back to look at Tilson. A young woman approached the doctor. Sully continued to observe, as the woman linked her arm in Tilson's and departed with him.

************

When he opened the door to the hotel room, Sully saw Michaela curled on the bed. He set down the books he had purchased and went to her. After spreading a blanket across her form, he sat in the chair beside her.

Before long, she awoke, "Sully?"

"I'm here," he wondered how she would react.

She sat up and immediately apologized, "I.... I'm sorry if I did something wrong."

"No," he quickly assured. "You didn't do anythin' wrong."

"Then why did you leave?" her brow creased.

"Didn't ya know what was happenin', Michaela?" he spoke softly. "Where we were headin'?"

"I.... I know I was feeling quite warm and...." her voice trailed off.

"We were gonna make love," he spoke softly.

She searched his face, "I.... I didn't want us to stop."

"We had to," he asserted. "You're real vulnerable right now. Who knows what could happen with your recovery?"

"Where did you go?" she probed.

"T' the park," he told her. "I ran int' Robert there."

"What was he doing there?" she wondered.

"Just walkin', like me," Sully did not reveal about the woman. "He seemed different. Not so full of himself."

She fell silent.

"I'm sorry I left you," he reached out for her hand. "I just couldn't let us go that far. I didn't mean t' worry ya.... or leave ya alone."

She lay back down, suddenly recognizing a memory.

"When you were in hiding from the Army, I cried myself to sleep every night except for those few occasions I spent with you. I've never felt so alone in my life."

"Michaela," he leaned closer, a lump forming in his throat.

"I would touch your pillow," she continued. "I would draw
one of your shirts next to me.... anything, just to feel that you were near."

"I thought about ya every second," he told her. "You're always in my heart."

"And you're in mine," she felt a rush of love for him.

He bent over her and tenderly kissed her, "You an' the baby need t' rest. Can ya go back t' sleep?"

She looked down at her belly, "Could you.... join us?"

He hesitated, then could not resist her eyes, "Sure."

Going around to the opposite side of the bed, he positioned himself beside her. She lifted up slightly, and he slid his arm beneath her shoulders.

Instantly, she began to relax. Sully tenderly kissed her temple.

"It's gonna be okay, Michaela," his tone was soothing. "The main thing is t' take care o' yourself an' the baby. Everythin' will fall int' place."

She looked into his eyes, seeing the hope and love within them.

"This has been just as much an ordeal for you, Sully," she knew.

"We'll get through it t'gether," he pledged. "Close your eyes now."

Soon they fell asleep.

************

Michaela awoke, still tucked against Sully's shoulder. Lifting up slightly, she studied his profile. Never in her life had she seen a more magnificently handsome man. Nor a more caring and sensitive one.

She sat up and caressed her expanding belly, then walked to the desk. Sully had set something on it earlier, and she was curious to see what it was.

Her heart warmed at the sight. It was a set of medical books. She opened the front cover of the top book. It was a recent copyright. Glancing over her shoulder, she smiled. He had purchased them for her to read up on the most current medical practices and advances.

After checking the time, Michaela noted they had an hour before needing to dress for dinner. She opened the first volume and began to read.

************

"Sully," Michaela touched his hand. "It's time to get ready."
"Mmm?" he rolled over somewhat disoriented.

"Dinner," she reminded.

"Oh," he became more alert.

"You must have been sleeping quite soundly," she noted.

"I was," he yawned and stretched his arms. "How long ya been awake?"

"About an hour," she responded. "I started reading one of the medical books. Thank you for getting them for me."

"They weren't for you," he teased. "They were for me. That Dr. Blackwell really inspired me."

She smiled at his attempt to lighten the mood.

"I've rung for our baths," she informed him. "They should be here any moment."

"Okay," he ran his fingers through his hair. "I'll go downstairs in the lobby 'til you're done."

"You don't have to leave," she stated.

"But I thought you didn't...." he was interrupted.

"It's all right," she assured. "We're married. Remember?"

He grinned, "I remember."

Soon the hotel staff efficiently set two tubs in the room, filled them with warm water and provided towels and wash cloths. They also placed a screen between them to provide privacy.

"Looks like they brought enough to bathe an army," Sully observed.

Michaela pinned her up her hair and stepped toward the tub. Sully could see her silhouette as she removed her robe and stepped into the water. Sighing, he went to the closet to pull out his formal attire. It had been pressed by the hotel staff during the day. He removed his shirt, then went to the basin to wash his face for a shave.

"Sully," Michaela called to him.

"Humm?" he had lathered his chin and cheeks.

"Could you wash my back?" she requested.

"Michaela," he hesitated.

"I can't reach it," she remarked.

"All right," he stepped around the screen.

He could not help but notice where the level of the water came, barely covering her breasts. He willed himself to focus on the task at hand.

"Lean forward some," he encouraged as he dipped his hand into the water to lather a cloth.

Michaela closed her eyes, to avoid the temptation of looking at her husband's physique as he touched her so lovingly.
His magic movements prompted her to relax.

"Don't go fallin' asleep again," he noticed.

"That feels marvelous," she sighed.

"Anythin' else, Dr. Quinn?" he grinned.

She leaned back against the tub again, "Am I ever Mrs. Sully?"

"Not very often," he replied.

"I see," she perceived a hint of hurt in his tone. "I take it, that bothers you."

He shrugged, "Not now. It did when ya first told me, though. Like I said before, you wanted t' carry on your Pa's name. We argued about it before we got married. I didn't wanna wear a weddin' ring, an' you didn't wanna change your name. So, we compromised."

"I kept my name, and you didn't wear a ring?" she assumed.

"Right," he smiled.

Her expression became serious, "But I did give you something."

"You remember?" he wondered.

"A band for your wrist," she suddenly recalled.

"This," Sully held up his arm to reveal a solid silver bracelet. "For our fifth anniversary." He removed it and read the inscription to her, "To Byron Sully, beloved husband and father. Forever my love, Michaela."

She thought hard, "We were in Denver. You were working on a committee to draft the Colorado state constitution."

"Yep," he was pleased. "I told ya it was the biggest weddin' ring I ever saw."

"And you've worn it ever since?" she wondered.

"'Cept when I'm workin'," he qualified. "I scratched it a few times when I did."

She smiled, "So you did end up wearing a wedding ring."

"That's right, Mrs. Sully," he kissed the tip of her nose. "Now, I'm gonna take my bath."

When Sully went around to his side of the screen, Michaela watched his silhouette. Her heart fluttered. She rose from the tub and began to dry off, all the while watching, wondering about him. Wrapping a towel around herself, she stepped to his tub.

Sully quickly reacted, "What are ya doin'?"

"I thought I might scrub your back," she offered.

"Uh...." he fumbled. "That's not necessary. Thanks."

She stared at him, enthralled by the glistening of his torso. She nodded silently, then walked toward the closet to dress.
Sully sighed, grateful that she had not lingered long enough to see the reaction of his body to her. How much longer could he suppress his desire for her? Firming his resolve, he determined he would do nothing that might jeopardize her recovery or take advantage of her vulnerability.

************

Sully, now dressed in his formal attire, sat and waited for Michaela to finish with her hair. As he watched his wife, he could almost forget that anything was wrong. She seemed her old self. Then she would get an expression of bewilderment which spoke of her confusion again.

Finally, she rose from the chair, "I'm ready."

He stood up, "You look beautiful."

"Thank you," she blushed. "And you look very handsome."

"Thanks," he reached for her coat.

As he helped her put it on, his hands lingered on her shoulders. She savored his touch, then turned to smile at him. Sully seemed mesmerized.

"You're so beautiful," he lightly touched her cheek.

"I believe you said that already," she mused.

He held her gaze as he recited:

"The wondrous moment of our meeting . . .
I well remember you appear
Before me like a vision fleeting,
A beauty's angel pure and clear."

"That was lovely," she complimented.

"You're supposed t' guess the poet," he prompted.

"Oh," she pondered. "Was it.... Milton?"


"Do I often guess wrong?" she frowned.

"Yep," he grinned in satisfaction. Then he changed the subject, "Did ya read much in the new books?"

"I was reading about amnesia," she noted.

"Learn anythin'?" he wondered.

"It's a good sign that my recollections are increasing," she noted. "The more time passes after my trauma, the less likely it is for any memories to return. Recollections of the most recent events, prior to the trauma, are not likely to be restored."

"I wish there was somethin' that could make it all come back t' ya," he sighed.

"That's been known to happen, too," she smiled.
Sully touched the side of her lips, "I wish...."
"Yes?" she anticipated.
"Nothin'," he looked away.
"Sully," she bid him to look at her. "In my heart, I know what we have, and I'll fight with every fiber of my being to remember it in my mind."
"I never knew ya t' not get somethin' ya wanted real bad," he grinned.
"I want us," she spoke with certainty.
He framed her face in his hands, "Ya think I might...."
"Yes," she read his mind.
They kissed sweetly. When they parted, their foreheads touched for a moment. Then, they departed for dinner.

************

"Michaela," Miriam waved when the Sullys entered the reception. "Come join us."

Sully guided Michaela to the table and held her chair as she sat.

"You look well rested," her friend commented. "And I must say that motherhood agrees with you. You're absolutely radiant."

"Thank you," Michaela's cheeks flushed.

Robert finished his glass of champagne, and reached for the bottle.

"Would you care for some, Mr. Sully?" he offered.

Sully shook his head, "No thanks."

"Miriam?" Robert held the bottle for his wife.

"No," she declined.

The doctor smiled, "I'll assume that Michaela is refraining."

"That's correct," she acknowledged.

Robert proceeded to pour himself a glass and down it in a few gulps. Quickly, he lifted the bottle to fill it anew.

Sully watched him, wondering why the man was in such a rush to become intoxicated.

Miriam turned to her friend, "Have you had many memories return?"

"Several," Michaela admitted.

Robert slurred his words, "I was telling Mr. Sully that I've seen recoveries that were quite rapid."

"When did you see Sully, darling?" Miriam was curious.
"In the park t'day," Sully noted.

"I didn't know you went to the park," she was puzzled. "I thought you said you were meeting an old friend."

"I met the old friend at the park," he frowned. "Why must you check up on me?"

Miriam's cheeks reddened.

Fortunately, a waiter arrived at that moment to take their orders. Sully eyed Dr. Tilson carefully, as he was becoming more inebriated. He also noticed that Robert could not take his eyes off Michaela.

"Would you care to dance, Michaela?" Robert invited.

Sully intervened, "Too late, Dr. Tilson. I asked my wife t' save all her dances for me t'night."

"What poor luck for me," his head swayed.

"Michaela," Sully stood and extended his hand.

She smiled demurely and rose to his level. He escorted her onto the dance floor and drew her close.

"A waltz," she raised an eyebrow.

"Your favorite," he grinned.

"Poor Miriam," she glanced toward the table. "I don't understand why Robert is behaving like this. How embarrassing for her."

"I didn't care for the way he was lookin' at you either," Sully stated.

"What?" Michaela was clueless.

"He was leerin' at ya," Sully's jaw tensed.

"My goodness," her eyes widened. "Are you jealous?"

"'Course not," he denied. "But when a man's had too much t' drink, an' he looks at a beautiful woman the way that man was, well.... no good can come from it."

"I suspect Miriam could use someone to talk to," Michaela sensed.

"Does this mean we're not gonna finish our dance?" he teased.

"Of course, we'll finish," she mused. "And I must say that you dance much better than you led me to believe."

"I get inspired when ya look at me like that," he retorted.

When they completed their dance, they returned to the table.

"Miriam," Michaela paused. "I was wondering if you might accompany me to the ladies sitting room?"

"Of course," she glanced at her husband. "I don't think I'll be missed."

The two women reached the sitting room and found it empty.

Michaela turned to face Miriam, "Would you like to talk about it?"
Suddenly, Miriam burst into tears.

************

Chapter 9

************

Michaela embraced her friend, "I'm sorry, Miriam."

She began to compose herself, "Oh, Michaela, you don't know the half of it."

Michaela clasped her hands, "I'm willing to listen."

Miriam took a deep breath to steady her nerves, "I insisted that Robert come with me on this trip. But not because I craved his attention. He hasn't given me that in several years now."

"Was it to get him away from the hospital?" she assumed.

"No," Miriam felt another wave of tears. "It was to get him away from the other women."

"Other women?" she was horrified.

"I have no doubt that's why he went to the park today, as well," Miriam asserted.

Her heartache was turning into anger.

"I've lost count of the affairs," Miriam's lower lip trembled.

"But you were so in love with him," Michaela knew. "You gave up everything.... your future as a physician."

"I thought I did," she swallowed hard. "But.... I suppose he sensed a resentment on my part."

"That's no excuse for breaking one's marriage vows," Michaela stated. "Has he been drinking like this very long?"

"No," she wiped the moisture beneath her eyes. "He doesn't do it often, thank God."

"What about your children?" Michaela feared they had been affected.

"They're away at school now, starting to lead their own lives," Miriam informed her. "We rarely see them. I live in a fine house, have every material possession I ever wanted, and it's totally empty."

"Then you should go back to medicine," Michaela affirmed.

"I can't," Miriam sighed. "I've been away too long."

"You can read up on the current literature," she suggested. "Perhaps take some courses at a college."

"I don't know, Michaela," she felt uncertain of herself.

"I believe in you," Michaela sounded determined. "And I believe that medicine needs you."

Miriam smiled slightly, "You still subscribe to the words of Elizabeth Blackwell, don't you?"

"More than ever," Michaela smiled.

************
Sully leaned on his elbows watching Robert become more inebriated. Soon, the doctor passed out. Sully sighed. Their dinners had arrived and were becoming cold.

He did not anticipate that Michaela would be gone so long. Classmates at other tables were finishing their meals and preparing to go into another hall for the final speeches.

Suddenly, Sully caught a glimpse of Michaela and Miriam returning. He stood up to greet his wife. Miriam put her hands on her hips when she spotted her husband.

"I guess I'm not much t' talk to," Sully quipped.

"You should have gone ahead and eaten, Sully," Michaela sat.

"That's okay," he slid her chair closer to the table.

Miriam only picked at her meal, but Michaela dug into hers with gusto. Sully smiled as he watched her.

Miriam stopped to observe her friend, as well, "Does she always eat like this?"

"When she's pregnant," Sully nodded. "Funny thing is, she takes the weight right off after the babies are born."

"Do you want your carrots?" Michaela gestured to her husband's plate.

"Go ahead," Sully offered them.

"Michaela Quinn," Miriam laughed. "You never cease to amaze me."

As they finished eating, Robert began to regain consciousness.

"Why don't I help him back t' your hotel?" Sully offered. "You ladies can stay an' enjoy the speakers."

"I can't tell you how grateful I am for your offer," Miriam looked around nervously.

"Where are you stayin'?" Sully inquired.


"I'll be back soon as I can," he touched Michaela's arm.

Sully helped Tilson to his feet, then swung his arm over his shoulder. Soon, the two men had departed.

Miriam felt tears building anew, "It appears I am the laughing stock of our reunion."

"No, you're not," Michaela denied.

"Oh, Michaela," she sighed. "You're so fortunate to be married to a man who adores you."

Michaela sighed, "I want nothing more than the restoration of all my memories of him."

"When I came to visit you, Sully showed me such kindness," she revealed. "He took me horseback riding so that I might see first hand why you love Colorado."

Again, Michaela struggled to recall.

"Come," Miriam strengthened her resolve. "Let's go listen to the final speeches."
Sully helped a staggering Robert to the hotel's front desk.

"I can take it from here, Mr. Sully," Robert slurred.

"You sure?" he wondered.

"Would you care to join me in a nightcap?" Robert offered.

"Why you doin' this?" Sully tilted his head.

"Drinking?" Robert interpreted. "So that I might get drunk and forget about my problems."

"No," Sully specified. "Why are you doin' this t' your wife? This is a special time for her.... comin' back t' her school. She had t' overcome obstacles you never did when you went t' medical school."

"Oh, trust me," he paused to burp. "I've heard about Miriam's obstacles ad nauseum."

Sully countered, "It's too bad ya don't know what ya got."

"What I've got?" Robert became sarcastic. "I've got an ocean of debts because my wife cannot seem to stop buying whatever suits her fancy."

"Could be she's buyin' things t' forget what she can't have," Sully stated.

"There is nothing that woman can't have," he asserted.

"What about your love an' approval?" Sully returned.

"What makes you an expert on what my wife wants?" Robert glared at him.

"I married a lady doctor," Sully noted. "I know the kind o' struggles she goes through every day, just t' help folks. It takes somethin' special inside a woman t' have that kinda courage. I think Miriam has it, too."

"Are you suggesting that Miriam should practice medicine?" his brow wrinkled.

"I'm only suggestin' you talk t' her," Sully rubbed his upper lip. "I better get back t' the reunion. Michaela needs me."

"You're quite henpecked, aren't you?" he became sarcastic.

"If henpecked means that I love my wife an' would do anythin' t' make her happy, then I reckon I am," Sully turned and left.

************

The last speaker asked each member of the class to stand and tell where they were and what they were doing. Miriam looked at Michaela, only to find that she had fallen asleep.

"Michaela," she nudged her. "Wake up."

"Mmm?" she yawned. "Wha.... Oh, my goodness."

Miriam chuckled, "Just like old times."

"Dr. Michaela Quinn," the speaker announced.
"What?" Michaela was disoriented.

Miriam whispered, "You're supposed to tell where you live and what you're doing.... but I'm sure they'll understand if you just...."

"No," Michaela stood up. "I can tell them."

Sully appeared at the door at that moment.

Michaela cleared her throat, "My name is.... Dr. Michaela Quinn.... Sully. I practice medicine in Colorado Springs, Colorado. I'm married and have seven children."

The audience murmured.

Michaela's cheeks flushed, "Soon to be eight."

The crowd applauded.

"Michaela," Professor Bloom smiled. "Since you were first in our graduating class, you gave the valedictory address. I know this is unexpected, but.... do you think you could offer some closing remarks to the class?"

She tensed. Then she felt Sully's hand on her back.

"You can do it," he whispered.

She stiffened her resolve and stepped forward to the podium.

"But make this one shorter than your valedictory address, Michaela," Professor Bloom teased.

She cleared her throat and surveyed the women and men before her.

Then she began, "I'm honored to have been asked to speak to you again. I began my journey here with my husband, and as some of you know, we were in the train wreck which took the life of dozens of people a few days ago. I'm afraid that the experience has affected my memory of the past several years. But I'll try my best."

She focused on Sully.

"When I was a little girl, growing up in Beacon Hill, I was given some insight by a very special man, my father, Dr. Josef Quinn. He taught me that service to humanity is noble and that one person can make a difference.

My father's words and works inspired me to enter the profession of medicine. I know that each of you also had something or someone in your life who planted that guiding spark. These past twenty years have seen us venture across our great land. Some of our classmates have established clinics and infirmaries. Some were of service in the War. And one was killed at Gettysburg.

Not long ago, my oldest daughter became the first female to graduate from Harvard Medical School."

The audience interrupted with applause.

Michaela resumed, "One would think that in twenty years, the course for women would have become easier, as we have proven ourselves in the field of medicine. Perhaps my daughter knew better what to expect based on my experiences. But much work remains if women are to be treated as competent colleagues and not anomalies by their male counterparts.

Many years ago, Abigail Adams, wife and mother of presidents, wrote about the inequities of education in our society, 'It is really mortifying, when a woman possessed of a common share of understanding considers the difference of
education between the male and female sex, even in those families where education is attended to. Why should your sex wish for such a disparity in those whom they one day intend for companions and associates. Pardon me if I cannot help sometimes suspecting that this neglect arises in some measure from an ungenerous jealousy of rivals near the throne.'"

There were chuckles in the crowd.

Michaela smiled at Sully, "But men should not feel threatened. My greatest support and inspiration have come from two incredibly wonderful men. They did not see me as a rival. They treated me as a partner, with gifts and talents to share, not repress.

Besides my late father, the other man who has played such a role in my life has been my husband, Byron Sully. Where would I be without him? Much thinner in about three months."

As the group chuckled, Sully's eyes lit up. She remembered his words on the train ride. Michaela had told him that often the most recent memories never return.

Michaela continued, "I have been blessed with a life partner who understands and nurtures me, our family and those who have had no voice in our society. What greater gift can we give our children than to foster their dreams through our own exemplary lives? Let us make a commitment, as we did twenty years ago, to demonstrate that service to humanity is noble and that one person, male or female, can make a difference. Thank you."

The audience rose to its feet to applaud her.

When she reached Sully, he kissed her cheek, "Good speech."

"Quite good," Miriam endorsed.

Michaela blushed at the overwhelming good wishes of her classmates, but the hour was late, and the hall soon began to empty. Finally, only Michaela, Sully and Miriam remained.

Michaela pivoted to face her friend, "Miriam, I do hope that you'll return to medicine."

She hedged, "I... I don't know if I can."

Michaela persisted, "Then promise that you'll seriously consider it."

Miriam embraced her, "I shall.... consider it, that is." Turning to Sully, she added, "You continue to take good care of this lady."

"Don't worry about that," he smiled.

"Why don't we share a carriage and take you to your hotel?" Michaela requested.

"No," Miriam raised a hand. "I'll be fine. Thank you both for everything. And be sure to write me when this little one arrives."

"I shall," Michaela pledged.

Before their good bye was prolonged further, Miriam turned and left them.

"You okay?" Sully put his arm around Michaela.

"It's sad to see what's become of her, Sully," she could not contain her emotions. "She's so unhappy."
"Maybe your speech will turn things around for her," he counseled.

"How do you mean?" she was uncertain.

"You got a way of inspirin' folks, Michaela," he commended.

She turned up the corner of her mouth, "Does that include you?"

"Always," he winked. "Come with me. I got somethin' for ya."

"What?" she was curious.

They walked to the coat check, where he retrieved their wraps and a package, which he handed to her.

"What's this?" she was surprised.

"Open it," he invited.

When she did, he could tell she was puzzled.

"It's a picture of your graduatin' class," he said. "I had 'em make a copy. That's why it took me a while comin' back t' our hotel room after sendin' the telegram t' Colorado Springs."

"Why do I need a copy?" she was curious. "I already have one."

"We had t' destroy it," he informed her. "There was some strange infection at your clinic. We burned everythin' inside t' get rid of it."

"Everything," she ran her hand along the photograph. "We put it all in a wagon and burned it. Father's instruments, as well."

"Uh-huh," he helped her with her coat.

"Thank you, Sully," she accepted. "I shall treasure this."

************

Sully had fallen asleep hours earlier, but Michaela could not. Tomorrow evening, they would depart for Colorado Springs, and in a few days, they would be home. She longed to remember every morsel of her life. Her heart ached as she contemplated all that lay just out of the reach of her memory. The patients she had treated, the friends she had made, the home in which she lived.

Most of all, she craved to recall details of her family. She reached for their photographs, even though Sully had advised her to not try so hard.

"I must remember," she uttered softly.

Sully heard Michaela's voice and opened his eyes. He glanced in her direction. His heart grew heavy as he observed her. She was staring at the pictures again.
"Michaela," Sully's voice startled her. "Why are you still up?"

She sighed, "Just looking at the photographs. I thought you were asleep."

He went to her.

Touching her shoulder, he spoke, "Maybe once ya get off the train in Colorado Springs, it'll all come back t' ya."

She smiled at this optimism.

"I got an idea," his eyes brightened. "Why don't we take in some sights t'morrow? The cold spell has snapped, an' we don't have t' be at the depot for a while."

"I... I don't know..." she hesitated.

"You could show me the city," he enticed. "An' we could buy some things for the kids. They'll be expectin' gifts."

"What kind of gifts?" she wondered.

Sully assured. "They don't need much. Just little things. Photographs, small toys...."

"Katie...." she suddenly thought. "She loves to draw."

"Uh-huh," Sully smiled. "She's even takin' some lessons at the college."

"Josef," she concentrated. "He would love a toy ship."

"Yep," his grin widened.

She closed her eyes and felt tears streaming down her cheeks, "Oh, Sully. I miss them."

He stroked her back gently, "You always miss 'em when we're away."

He knelt down beside her. Leaning her head against his shoulder, she wept. Sully rubbed her back and kissed her temple. He did not know what else he could say to ease her anguish. And he was becoming concerned that her torment would start to affect the baby.

So he simply whispered, "I'm here."

When she finally composed herself, Michaela looked into her husband's eyes, "What I said about you in my speech.... The words just came to me. I know that you're my inspiration."

"That's real nice t' hear," he felt a lump in his throat. "You're my inspiration, too."

"Talking to Miriam gave me an even greater appreciation of what I have with you," Michaela revealed. "She told me that Robert has had numerous affairs."

Sully shook his head, "Just goes t' show ya how one thing can fester between folks t' the point where they lose sight of what's important. Then they only hurt each other."

"Medicine was so important to her," she knew.

He noted, "You told me one time, medicine's not only what ya do. It's who ya are."

A dimple creased her forehead as she attempted to recall the occasion.
Sully touched the small crease lightly.

Then it came to her, "I was being sued for malpractice."

"Yep," his eyes studied her adoringly.

Her emotions swelled again, "I'm sorry, Sully. I know I must seem terribly ungrateful for recalling only fragments of my memory."

He gave a reassuring smile, "You don't seem ungrateful. It's gotta be frustratin'. Sorta like bein' in a fog an' only catchin' glimpses of light here an' there. Ya still wonder where ya are."

"That's exactly what it's like," she marveled. "You do understand."

"Yep," he guided her to stand. "An' I also understand that it's time you an' the baby get some sleep. I want ya energized when ya show me around t'morrow."

"The zoo," she nodded. "I'll take you to the zoo."

"Sounds romantic," he teased.

She tensed, "I.... I know that you're hoping for that part of my memory to return."

He softly toyed with a strand of her hair, "You don't need t' feel any pressure where that's concerned. I'm happy with each piece of our lives ya remember. An' pretty soon, they'll all fit t'gether."

************

Chapter 10
************

As Michaela and Sully walked along the street, she explained the history and layout of the city of Philadelphia.

"Philadelphia means city of brotherly love," she noted.

"Seems like folks would be friendlier then," he retorted.

Michaela went on, "William Penn planned the street patterns of the city himself. It was based on a logical grid based around four town squares, lying between the Delaware and Schulykill Rivers."

Sully listened with fascination.

When they reached City Hall, she paused, "There's Penn's statue atop it. No building in the city is allowed to be taller than this hat."

"Don't seem like they'd need any buildin's higher than that anyway," he reasoned.

She added, "According to the brochure in the hotel, it's a city of numerous firsts.... America's first fire department, first library, hospital, art museum, first zoo...."

"Ah, the zoo," he raised an eyebrow. "You were gonna show me that."

"But we haven't seen Independence Hall or the Liberty Bell," she stopped.

He looked down as if to pout.

"All right," she took his arm. "The zoo, it is."
"Let's ride the street car," he invited.

She smiled, "All right."

Soon, they arrived at the zoo. After paying fifty cents, they passed through the Frank Furness Victorian gates and picked up pamphlets. Then they spotted a beautiful home.

Michaela read, "This is The Solitude, home of John Penn, grandson of William Penn. His home is considered to be Philadelphia's most precise and elegant expression of neoclassical style."

"Neoclassical," Sully imitated her pronunciation. "So, where's the animals?"

"This way," she saw the sign.

They came upon some deer. Sully's demeanor changed.

Michaela noticed, "What's wrong?"

He shook his head, "We got deer runnin' free back home."

Kneeling down, she focused her attention on a fawn standing to the side of the herd.

"Michaela, you all right?" he knelt beside her.

"Byron," she spoke softly.

"What?" he was uncertain.

"Brian named an injured fawn Byron, after you," he recalled.

"You treated it after it was shot," Sully filled in the details. "Brian wanted t' keep it."

"But you talked him into letting it go free," she nodded.

Then they both looked at the deer again.

"I understand," she whispered.

"Understand?" he questioned.

"Your love of nature," she felt a greater awareness.

"Come on," he helped her up. "Let's look at some o' the other animals."

When they reached the elephant exhibit, they quickly noticed a problem. Several zoo staff were trying to subdue the creature, but its cries were attracting much attention.

"What's wrong?" Michaela asked an observer.

"The elephant's trying to give birth," the man pointed.

"I'm a doctor," she revealed. "Perhaps I could help."

"Michaela," Sully was nervous. "I think it's too dangerous."

"The poor creature is suffering," she emphasized.
Debby K's DQ Fan Fiction - Remembrance of Things Past

She approached the man who seemed to be in charge, "I'm Dr. Michaela Quinn. Can I be of any service?"

"Ya better stand back, Ma'am," he advised. "We got a veterinarian comin'."

Michaela frowned, "It doesn't appear that the elephant is going to wait."

Reluctantly, the supervisor agreed, "All right. You can help."

Sully went with her as she approached the animal.

"Ropes," Michaela requested of the staff. "We'll need some ropes."

"Anythin' else?" another offered.

"As much saw dust and straw as you can gather," she removed her coat and began to roll up her sleeves.

"Michaela," Sully asserted. "Let me do the work. You tell me what t' do."

She turned to the supervisor, "With what human is the elephant most familiar?"

"Me," he pointed to himself.

"Good," she nodded. "I'd like for you to talk to her. She needs to hear your reassuring voice."

Another yell erupted from the animal.

"Tether her legs," Michaela directed.

The staff complied with her wishes. Everyone stood riveted watching the creature. Then, suddenly, it appeared. The calf. Michaela guided Sully where to place the straw. The baby landed in the soft material. Then it tried to stand. Within ten minutes, it was able to do so on its own.

"Guide her to her mother, and untether the legs," she pointed.

The staff did as she instructed.

"She seems calm," the supervisor observed of the mother.

"Let the calf go to her now," she watched in awe.

The baby found its way to the mother and soon began to nurse.

Sully wiped his brow and smiled at his wife, "Good job."

"I didn't do anything but boss others," she chuckled.

"You kept us calm, Dr. Quinn," the supervisor added. "Thank you for your efforts. It's the first elephant we've had in captivity. This one will go in the record books."

"I'm glad to have been of service," she acknowledged.

"It's never dull with you, Michaela Quinn," Sully spoke in admiration as he helped his wife with her coat. "You ready t' see the rest o' the zoo?"

She noted the time, "Certainly."
As they continued their tour, Michaela requested that they stop to sit on a bench. Sully was not sure if she was tired or trying to recall something. He waited for her to speak.

"I think...." her expression changed. "I think I helped to deliver another animal...."

"You did," he agreed. "We were on a cattle drive. Ya even rode through a prairie fire t' save that calf."

She nodded silently, then recalled more, "You and I stole away. You began to wash my arm and back."

"We kissed," he grinned.

She looked at him, then seemed to peer deeper into his eyes. The connection each felt was palpable. There were no words.... only a profound understanding of her gratitude and love. He smiled slightly. Then the corner of her mouth turned up. He held out his hand, and she clasped it.

"I think I know what we can buy the children," the idea occurred to him.

"What?" she was interested.

"Stuffed elephants," he mused. "So they'll remember what their Ma did."

************

Once settled in their train compartment, Michaela and Sully sat opposite each other. She read a medical text, and he perused a newspaper. Mile after mile passed in comfortable silence.

As dusk approached, Sully looked up from the paper to observe that his wife was asleep. He shook his head and smiled.

"Michaela," he bid. "Let me get the bed ready for ya."

She awoke disoriented, "Wha...."

"You were asleep," he pointed out. "Let me get the bed down for ya."

She looked down awkwardly, "I.... I don't mind sleeping like this."

"Don't be stubborn," he countered. "That can't be comfortable."

"I said this is fine," she asserted, raising her voice.

Sully was stung by her tone, "Fine."

"Fine," she repeated.

He folded his arms and gazed out the window. Michaela instantly regretted her reaction. There was nothing wrong with his wanting her to sleep in comfort, but.... where would he sleep? They had not discussed that prior to boarding the train.

"Sully," she was compelled to apologize. "I'm sorry."

He shrugged, "That's okay. I reckon ya oughta be able t' sleep however ya want."
"What about you?" she posed the question.

"What about me?" he was uncertain.

"Where will you sleep.... if the bed is down?" she clarified.

"I can sleep down here," he gestured to the small space that would remain.

"That wouldn't be comfortable," she acknowledged.

"I'm more concerned that you an' the baby get rest," he countered.

She knew he was right, "Then I suppose I should sleep in the bed."

"Good," he stood up to accommodate her.

Soon, he had the bed prepared for her. Michaela paused.

Sully sensed, "I'll step out so ya can get ready."

"Thank you," she nodded shyly.

When Sully reached the corridor, he stood and gazed out the window at the passing lights. His heart grew heavy, knowing that in spite of what she had recalled, Michaela still felt awkward toward him.

Soon, the door opened a crack.

Michaela beckoned, "You can come in now."

Silently, Sully returned to the compartment. Michaela settled into bed, and he positioned himself in the cramped area opposite it.

"You warm enough?" he inquired.

"It's a little chilly," she remarked.

"Here," he reached for a blanket. "Take this."

"What about you?" she observed. "You won't have anything to keep you warm."

"I'll be okay," he assured.

Michaela sighed and nodded. Closing her eyes, she sensed Sully was watching her. When she opened her eyes, he was staring at her.

"Are you sure you're all right, sleeping in that space?" she queried.

"It'll do fine," he told her.

"Sully," she sat up. "This is ridiculous. You can't sleep there. It's much too cramped."

"The train's full, Michaela," he informed her. "There's no other compartments."

"Then you should sleep with me," she spoke instinctively.

He hesitated, "I don't think that's such a good idea."
"It's a matter of practicality," she reasoned as she patted the area beside her. "Come."

Sully approached her tentatively.

"It's all right," she encouraged. "I won't bite."

He smiled, "I know."

Positioning himself atop the blankets so his form would not touch her, the closeness to his wife sent shivers down his spine.

"You're shaking," she noted. "You must be cold. Get under the covers with me."

Reluctantly, Sully did as she suggested spooning his chest to her back. Then he closed his eyes and attempted to calm his racing heart.

"Better?" she hoped.

"Real good," his voice sounded different.

She shut her eyes. The scent of him filled her senses.

Her mind suddenly recalled a moment between them, "We were looking for Loren...."

"What?" he questioned.

She attempted to remember more, "He was missing.... you and I.... and others were looking for him. We snuck away from the group to...."

"To what?" he wondered why she stopped.

"To be alone," she smiled. "We found ourselves atop an anthill."

He chuckled, "I'd forgotten that."

Michaela rolled over to face him, then lightly placed her hand above his heart, "I adore your laugh."

His eyes met hers, instantly triggering their connection.

"Sully," her voice was enticing.

"God, Michaela," he sighed. "I want you t' remember us so much."

"I want that, too," she was melting.

He touched her chin, "I love you."

"And I love you," she spoke the words he longed to hear.

"But we can't do this," he resisted his feelings.

"I.... I want to remember everything about us," she affirmed.

As they gazed into each others eyes, their longings intensified.

His jaw tensed, "I promised myself, I wouldn't do this until you were ready."
"Please," she invited. "I want this. I am ready."

Sully caressed her cheek and sweetly kissed the sides of her mouth. Then he felt her hand sliding beneath his shirt to touch his skin.

She searched his face, gauging his reaction. Slowly, he started to draw up the hem of her nightgown to caress her thigh. He felt her tense. Stopping, he plied tender kisses to the lobe of her ear.

Michaela felt as if she were on fire with desire for him, "I've... missed us."

"How I've waited t' hear ya say that," he kissed her repeatedly.

This time, when he tried to raise her nightgown, she did not resist. Michaela felt goose bumps across her body and yearned to feel his skin next to hers.

"What about your clothes?" she whispered.

Without breaking his gaze, he sat up and unbuttoned his shirt. Michaela watched him intently, running her palm across his chest when he finished.

Then Sully stood up to undo his trousers, "You sure?"

She nodded and watched him slide the pants down his hips. Her heart skipped a beat at the sight of his magnificent physique. Her cheeks flushed at the thought of his returning to her bed.

Slowly, he repositioned himself next to her. Now, flesh against flesh, their touches were unencumbered.

"You're the most beautiful woman in the world," his words further aroused her.

"Sully," she felt her eyes welling with sweet emotions.

He worried at her reaction, "We'll stop if you're scared. We don't have t' do anythin', Michaela. I'll just hold you."

"No," she pulled herself closer to him. "I'm not scared."

She ran her fingers enticingly through his hair. Sully closed his eyes, relishing the familiar touch of her. Then she lightly trailed her hand down his chest. He felt the warmth building within his body.

He tenderly caressed her belly, "I love our babies."

When he directed his hand lower, Michaela gasped. Then she felt something else.... it was Sully.... more fully aroused. He brought himself to her. That which she had feared during her loss of memory now came flooding back to her in rhythmic waves. She was remembering, savoring him with each movement of their bodies.

Sully supported himself above her with his elbows, studying her face and praying that he would see only love. He did. Michaela arched her neck, inviting his kisses.

"I missed ya so much," he continued his motions.

"Don't stop," she clung to him.

Her voice compelled him to the point of no return. He felt Michaela's arms around his neck, securing their connection.
Finally, their bodies reached the apex of fulfillment. Sully released all that he possessed, overwhelming Michaela with surging emotions. Her pulse sped at dizzying speed. Holding back nothing, each shared the exciting passions which engulfed them. As his warmth coursed through her, Michaela felt awash in his love. And she felt something else. Her memories had poured back. Anything she attempted to recall was there.

Sully slowly pulled away from her, stroking her hair and plying soft kisses to her lips.

"You all right?" he was breathless.

She did not reply.

"Michaela," he became concerned.

"I remember, Sully," her voice was faint.

"Remember what?" he was uncertain.

"All about us," she looped her leg across him as she turned.

With her body flush against his, Sully closed his eyes and sighed.

"What are you doing?" she wondered.

"Thankin' the Spirits," he kissed her.

She concentrated, "I remember our children.... our home.... our life."

He tenderly stroked her hair, "Tell me."

"I remember Brian.... first calling me 'Ma,'" her mind raced. "And his fall from the tree.... operating on him. I remember Colleen.... helping tend to the sick during the epidemic.... meeting Peter.... reading romance stories.... her wedding and graduation from medical school. I remember Matthew.... lost in the mine.... serving as sheriff.... his marriage to Emma.... everything, Sully."

"The children, too?" he hoped.

"Oh, yes," she toyed with the hair on his chest. "Squeezing your face during a labor pain with Katie.... her first word.... her first day of school.... her artistic talents. And Josef.... the wrath of nature on the day he was born.... his mischief.... his pokles."

Sully's grin broadened.

She spoke more rapidly, "And the twins.... Mother was there when they...."

Michaela stopped.

"What's wrong?" his brow wrinkled.

"I remember Mother's death," her eyes saddened. "And Marjorie.... Snow Bird and Black Kettle.... Anthony."

"It's truly back," he felt a lump in his throat.

Her heart filled, "And I recall my patients.... Horace's gout, Myra's strange illness, Loren's hernia, delivering little Abraham...."

His face beamed, "That's my old Michaela."
"Old?" she pretended to be offended.

"Not so old," he lifted her chin for another kiss.

He tenderly toyed with the hair at her temple and recited:

"At the mid hour of night, when stars are weeping, I fly
To the lone vale we loved, when life shone warm in thine eye;
And I think oft, if spirits can steal from the regions of air
To revisit past scenes of delight, thou wilt come to me there
And tell me our love is remember'd, even in the sky!"

"Oh, Sully," she gazed into the eyes she adored. "Our love is remembered.... our present and past."

"Don't ya wanna know the poet?" he raised an eyebrow.

She concentrated, "Was it Shelley?"

"Moore," he grinned.

She lay her head against his shoulder, "I have you back, and I never want to lose you again."

"There was never any danger of that," he assured.

Soon, he sensed her rhythmic breathing. She was asleep. He kissed the top of her head, grateful to have her fully back again.

"We got it all, Michaela," he sighed in contentment. "Remembrances of things past an' present."

THE END

EPILOGUE

Most of the words of Elizabeth Blackwell were taken verbatim from her letters and quotations.

In the 1990s, Philadelphia began to allow the construction of buildings which surpassed the height of William Penn's statue.

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