



# Chapter 7

Bởi:  
unknown

“How’d you sleep last night, Carrie Anne?” Dr. Paulson was the undoctoctor – he always started out by asking human questions, and only after he’d processed the answers did he move on to medical matters.

I nodded and smiled. It hurt too much to talk, but I’d actually slept well for the first time since the latest surgery. I let my imagination take me on a stroll through the forest that I pictured surrounding The Healing Tree while Dr. Paulson read through the nurse’s notes. He closed the chart at last and laid it on the bed next to me. “What do you think,” he asked, “are you ready for some real food?”

Before I could answer (the answer would have been no), Maggie erupted into the room with a laugh. “Did I hear someone say food?”

Dr. Paulson rolled his eyes with mock exasperation. “Maggie, do the words ‘do not disturb’ mean anything to you?”

Maggie shot a quizzical glance at Dr. Paulson, then smiled and winked at me. “You mean, like those signs they have on hotel room doors?”

Dr. Paulson nodded, and Maggie went on. “Well, yeah, but Harriet Edwardson is going home today and I wanted your opinion on the poem I wrote for her to take with her.” She opened her omnipresent pink journal and handed it over. “Well, it’s not really a poem in the technical sense, but I think she’ll like it anyway.”

“Excuse me for a moment,” Dr. Paulson said to me as he accepted the journal, “it appears that I’ve been summoned to a STAT poetry review.” He slipped on a pair of reading glasses and read Maggie’s work, looked out the window for a moment, then read it once more. Handing the journal back, he said, “it’s a lovely poem, Maggie, one of your best. But Mrs. Edwardson has a very difficult prognosis. I’m afraid that a poem like this could be giving her false hope.”

Maggie frowned and set the journal on the bed, on top of my medical record. “False hope? You mean, as opposed to true despair? Seriously, Dr. Paulson, how can you give someone false hope? Like the poem says, there’s no such thing. It’s an oxymoron.”

She looked from the aquarium to The Healing Tree, then glared defiantly back at Dr. Paulson. “So what if you’re right. What if she really doesn’t have much time. Does that mean she shouldn’t have a few rays of hope to brighten those last few days?”

Maggie reached up and grabbed a handful of her hair and then, with a flourish fit for Hollywood, she pulled it off. Her hair. All of it. She stood there bald as a cue ball glaring at Dr. Paulson. “If it weren’t for denial,” she said, her voice a black panther on a leash, “I’d be dead. Look at me. I have no hair, the figure of a toothpick in tennis shoes, and I throw up every Wednesday at seven after chemo. What kind of guy is going to ask me out for a date? But you know what? My Prince Charming is out there looking for me. And he’s going to find me. If that’s denial with a capital D, well, I got no problem with that.” Maggie stuck the wig back on her head, crooked, and gave it a tug. “Dreams are a whole lot better than reality, whatever that is. Dreams do come true, you know. But sometimes you’ve got to deny reality for the dream to happen.”

Maggie kept tugging at her wig, trying to get it on reasonably straight, and looked over at me. “Live your dreams before they come true, just in case you never wake up. Now there’s a poem for you, Carrie Anne,” she said, wagging a finger at me. “McZen wrote it. And it’s pretty darned good advice. Remember that.” Now she returned her defiant glare to Dr. Paulson.

He picked up the pink journal from the bed. “Let me read it again.” Maggie gave me another surreptitious wink. Dr. Paulson cleared his throat, and this time read Maggie’s poem out loud.

### The Hope Diamond

The most precious diamond in the world cannot be purchased, it can only be accepted.

The most precious diamond in the world cannot be seen, it can only be felt.

The most precious diamond in the world cannot be worn around your neck, it can only be kept safe in your heart.

The most precious diamond in the world cannot be taken away, it can only be given away.

The most precious diamond in the world is free for the asking, and you can have as many as you ask for.

The most precious diamond in the world is stronger than iron, but is more fragile than a dream.

The most precious diamond in the world is always genuine, because there's no such thing as false hope.

He tucked the journal under his arm and said, "let's get a second opinion." Then he turned to me. "What do you think, Carrie Anne? Should a doctor go along with giving a patient hope even when he thinks there is no hope?"

"There's always hope," I said, and even as I was saying it couldn't believe that I was hearing myself say it.

Dr. Paulson read over the poem once more, silently this time, then handed the pink journal back to Maggie. "It's perfect, Maggie. Harriet will love it. And now, if it's alright with you, I'd like to get back to work here. Okay?"

Maggie gave me one last wink, then skipped toward the door. Before she stepped out of the room, Dr. Paulson called after her. "One more thing, Maggie. After you've printed it up, could you make copies for Carrie Anne and me? And make sure to autograph them. Someday, when you're rich and famous, we'll both be able to say that we were there at the first reading."

"Hope flies on the silver wings of dawn," Maggie chirped as she disappeared through the door.

Today Maggie was wearing a t-shirt that said *There's More To Me Than What You See*. I sensed that I was just beginning to glimpse the depth of this young mermaid poet.