

Preface

Geoff Summers turned to look at his wife, reaching mutely for her hand as the doctor leaned forward and placed a document on the desk between them.

“This is the schedule of treatment we propose,” he said softly. “But we need to do a few more tests.” His manner was sympathetic, his brow lined with furrows of experience. He smiled thinly.

“One step at a time.”

Geoff turned to Penny again and she was there, yet not there. Her image was ethereal, it had begun to fade. That was the moment when Geoff realised that he was once again in the dream, *that* recurrent dream, unreality seemingly real.

He looked back at the doctor whose appearance was morphing before his eyes. Gone were the kindly expression, the sympathy and the dark hair. The man he saw now was round-faced, with bulging eyes behind tinted spectacles, an image that was menacing and intimidating. It was Ford, *Adam Ford the bastard*. He looked to his right but Penny was not there any more.

At that point the dream ended abruptly, instantly tipping him back into reality, so that he became immediately aware that he was Geoff Summers masquerading as John Jeffries and living a lie.

He was drenched in sweat and he had a thousand-hammer headache. The anger returned, the emptiness and frustration returned, with the bitter recollection of what had happened since that interview with the specialist only four months ago. He glanced at the bedside clock which told

him it was six-twenty, so he knew that more sleep would be impossible, and he rose to face another day.

But he knew also that it would be a day like no other, because today he was to take the first irrevocable steps towards his new life.