



## **Jim's Life**

A novel by Jason Matthews

Sample - Jim wakes in the hospital

*2009 Jason Matthews. All rights reserved.*

*All we are is the result of our thoughts. What we think, we become. - Buddha*

Jim began to wake. His eyes blinked reflexively as he took in the unfamiliar sights. White flashes made it difficult to focus. White sheets. White walls. Bright light through a window. This place was completely new. Having no idea where he was, his initial conscious thought was whether it was real or a dream.

Along with the blinking of his eyes, he became aware of his head, a bulky object just above where he sensed he existed. His head moved in minute amounts. Attached to the neck collar, it brushed against the pillow. It felt completely alien though he was aware the movement was his own. Each adjustment of his head and eyes altered his view ever so slightly. This side. That side.

He sensed his assisted breathing. The device connected to his lungs was still on automatic operation. It filled him with an oxygen mix then allowed the air to escape. As the air moved into his lungs, he realized something was filling him and then leaving. In. Out. He could hear the sounds it made. Raspy coming in, slightly different going out.

Slowly his appendages began to move in tiny amounts. Fingers and toes. Hands and feet. Legs and arms. Jim's eyes began to focus more clearly as his new body's arm moved closer to his face. The fingers twitched near his nose and mesmerized him. The first inklings of panic brewed as Jim stared at his own fingers wiggling back and forth. He watched in stunned amazement, staring at his hand and the violet-white glow around it. Everything in the room suggested peace and calm, but everything felt utterly frightening.

His lips quivered. Eyes and brows creased back. Nostrils flared with air going in and out irregularly, his lungs now setting their own pace despite the respiratory device. His pulse accelerated. His mouth opened slowly in horror. A sound occurred during an exhale, a soft, schwa sound. "Aaah."

On the following exhalation, Jim realized he was making the sound. He made it again. "Aaah." With each exhale the sound grew louder. The room's computer recorded his vital signs and sent an alert to the

nurse's station.

A nurse's holographic image popped up over the bed.

"Please relax, James. Assistance is on the way," it said in a soothing tone.

Jim's sounds turned into an anguished cry. He struggled against the devices holding him in place as the hologram reminded him assistance was on the way. He began screaming louder and flailed against the neck collar like a person going mad. Eventually the sound of running footsteps reached the door, which dematerialized. Vicki burst through the opening. She held down his arms in an attempt to calm him.

"Relax, James. You're alright. Relax." She pressed him into the bed. "Relax, James, please."

Vicki was firm against his struggling. He looked at her with the same expression of doubt and fear that he had for everything. He closed his eyes and screamed louder. The boy's muscles were so weak from the coma that she easily held him in place. What concerned her was the frightened look on his face, his eyes closed tightly as if keeping the outside world away.

"It's okay, James. You're going to be fine. Relax, James. Relax."

Two nurses and a doctor finally arrived. The nurses helped Vicki to keep the boy still while Dr. Fredericks pulled a vapor injector from his lab coat. He brought the device to the catheter and injected the solution into the plastic tube.

He said, "Three, two, one..."

Jim looked up at the four of them somewhat dazed. His efforts became exhausted before he passed out. Vicki and the nurses returned his arms to his side.

"What the hell's going on here?" Fredericks asked.

Vicki couldn't believe the question. "He's regained consciousness."

"I can see that, Nurse Morgan. Get him out of this room. Take him upstairs to ICU."

"Yes," Vicki said. She quickly realized how wonderful it was despite Fredericks' being a prick.

"Best with the straps," one of the nurses said.

Vicki had already reached down the side of the bed and grabbed one end of a thick black strap. She attached it to Jim's arm then cinched it to the bedside.

"Legs and head too," Fredericks added. The other nurses rolled their eyes as he had pointed out the obvious.

One of the nurses asked, "What's that then? Two months?"

"Three," Vicki answered. "He arrived just over three months ago."

Brison and Flow came in at once. Brison had a smear of grease on his face and plenty on his shirt and hands. Jim was still unconscious from the drug and attached to all his previous devices. Now his head contained a series of tiny patches neatly tucked across his scalp in shaved spots to monitor brain activity.

The parents walked to the edge of his bed and touched him gently. With tears in her eyes Flow squeezed through his headset and respirator and kissed his forehead as she had done so many times before.

"When do you expect him to wake again?" Flow asked Vicki.

"Maybe in an hour. It was a mild sedative."

"Why was he sedated at all?" Brison asked.

"He was panicking. We didn't want him going into shock."

"Is that normal?"

"There is no normal for brain-death recovery. We're in uncharted waters."

"What's the next step?" Flow asked.

"Give him chances to relax. If he wakes and panics, we sedate him. Less and less each time until he can finally deal with it."

"How come he's still breathing with the respirator?" Brison asked.

"He's not. He's breathing on his own."

"Really?" Brison became more excited.

"Mm-hmm."

"What's it still hooked up for?"

"Precautionary."

"Have you seen anything like this before?" Flow asked.

"From such an extreme state? Never."

In the Walkins' living room, the image maker sprang up. Missy heard the device become active from the kitchen and walked over to check it.

When she got there, a Fed unit addressed her. "Hello, Abigail. Are your parents around?"

"Dad's working. Mum's lying down. Should I wake her?"

"She can watch this at her convenience. This is to inform you of recent developments in the case against James Ranck. The defendant has regained consciousness at St. Teresa Hospital."

"Really?"

"Your parents may contact Federation Brisbane if they wish to inquire further."

"Okay."

The unit disappeared. Missy raced to her room to check her image maker.

Roger Tolsom addressed his virtual audience. "He's awake! The Ranck boy has returned from his coma. The interesting thing about it, he's no longer brain-dead. Now how do you suppose this happened?"

"Very interesting," Clarky said. "Conspiracy? I think so. Let's get our most common thought on that."

A Russian member of the audience said, "Can't believe he ever was brain-dead then."

Another shouted, "Sounds like a cover-up."

Many agreed. "Fed visits put a stop to that."

From the rest of the room came murmurs of "Agreed." Clarky nodded along happily with them.

"Not so fast," an elderly woman stated. "Dr. Maynard has an impeccable record. I know her. She wouldn't jeopardize her position for this boy."

Roger moderated. "An excellent point. Maynard has a fine record for seventy years. If anything implicated her in some kind of deception, she'd be gone to Fed prosecutors like chum to sharks. Why risk it for this boy?"

"Doesn't make sense," the elderly woman added. "She's smarter than that."

Murmuring filled the set.

"Decorum please. Muting is close," Roger said. "Most popular thoughts will be heard first."

The din settled down.

Another woman added, "Maynard wouldn't report it that way if it wasn't true. He's of no consequence to her. No family ties, no work ties. The Rancks are liberal Simplists of modest means."

"Can't even afford their hospital bills," another woman said.

Roger allowed the din to grow. "Of modest means that they can't even afford the bills from the accident. So I'd like to pose that there is little incentive for deception from the staff at St. Teresa."

"That's what they get for being Simplist!" a chorus of voices echoed.

"Then what's happened here?" a man asked from the front row. "A miracle?"

Some laughter broke out. The din grew in volume.

"Muting in effect," Roger said. "At this time, I don't suppose we can rule that out. Let's vote. How many think some form of miracle has taken place?" He paused as the numbers came in. "Not many of you. Less than five percent with over seven thousand votes."

Mariposa Salvatore watched Roger's program from her home in Brazil. As the audience delved into a thorough debate over James Ranck, she breathed more easily than she had for the past few months.

(End of current sample)

Find more from Jason Matthews at his websites

[www.cosmicforceproductions.com](http://www.cosmicforceproductions.com) - [www.thebigbangauthor.com](http://www.thebigbangauthor.com)  
<http://www.thelittleuniverse.com>- [www.thelittleuniverse.webs.com](http://www.thelittleuniverse.webs.com)