Chapter 9: **Waking Up and Saving the Lost Souls of the Dead**

**Story of Dr. and Mrs. Carl A. Wickland**

**- Nandor Fodor -**

          A DOCTOR may get many shocks in the pursuance of his professional duties, but no worse one could be imagined than to be suddenly addressed and reprimanded by a corpse which he was about to dissect.

That the doctor in the case need not have been necessarily drunk or insane is the solemn plea of Dr. Carl A. Wickland, member of the Chicago Medical Society, of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and Director of the National Psychological Institute of Los Angeles, California.

He was cutting on the arm and neck of the body of a woman which was for seven months on ice. Faintly as from a distance he heard a voice say distinctly:

"Don't murder me!"

He concluded that the words came from a child in the street, though no children were heard playing about.

The following afternoon he heard a rustling sound from a crumpled newspaper lying on the floor. But he paid no attention.

A few days later he held some trance experiments at his home with his wife. Towards the end, in a semi-comatose condition, his wife rose and struck at him angrily, saying:

"I have some bones to pick with you."

A period of struggle followed. Dr. Wickland had sufficient knowledge of the phenomena of the so-called spirit control to get alarmed. He asked the voice which spoke from the mouth of his wife what the trouble was.

"Why do you want to kill me?" the entity demanded to know.

Dr. Wickland answered that he was not killing anyone.

"Yes, you are. You are cutting on my arm and neck. I shouted at you not to murder me, and I struck that paper on the floor to frighten you, but you would not pay any attention."

Dr. Wickland understood. The entity in control believed herself to be the dead body he was dissecting. She apparently did not realize her apartness and still clung to the "mortal coil".

He took a deep breath and set out to tell the momentous story, to bring the awful truth home to his interlocutor that she was dead.

It was not his first case and far from being the worst one of the same nature. He grappled with it because no experiments on earth seemed to have so tremendous an issue hanging on them as this one.

Some time ago his wife was discovered to be what is called a trance medium. She did not like it. She was afraid of "disturbing the dead". Whereupon the voices that spoke through her organism during her state of unconsciousness explained to Dr. Wickland that a grievously wrong conception existed among mortals regarding the conditions prevailing after death.

They told him that in reality there was no death but a simple and natural transition to another world: that advanced human souls, on the other side of life, are ever striving to communicate with mortals to enlighten them as to the higher possibilities which await the progressive spirit, but that owing to the prevailing terrible ignorance a great majority of the dead do not realize the change that took place in their condition and continue to remain in their earthly haunts; that they are the cause of untold mischief and misery; that they often produce invalidism, immorality, crime and seeming insanity, for they hang around those whose armour they can pierce and, ignorantly or maliciously, attempt to share their earthly existence.

It was also revealed that the greatest mission work on earth is waiting for those who would help these misguided souls, that they are nearer to earth than heaven, that they can be reached more easily by mortals than by advanced spirits. In their case a psychic intermediary would have to be found. The advanced souls would see that the dead who found no footing in their new life, and the obsessing entities, who exercised a vicious control over mortals in the body, should be attracted to the intermediary, and enlightened as to their true position. Mrs. Wickland was to be the psychic intermediary, and if Dr. Wickland would allow them to use her they would prove their case and would safeguard her from any harm.

Dr. Wickland gave his consent. He realized that criminology, psychopathology, and human thought in general, would have to undergo a revolutionary revision if the claims of the trance entities were proved.

It was following his consent that the dead owners of the corpses he was dissecting away from his home and unknown to his wife, were brought back to tell their story.

Most of these "unearthly" interviews started rather stormily. The temporary possessors of Mrs. Wickland's body would not admit that they were dead. If they were men, a mirror was held in front of them to prove that they were in a female body. They declared that they were hypnotized. Occasionally they grew violent and had to be expelled.

This expulsion took place by charges from a static electric machine. Why electric shocks should have the desired effect was not plain. But the visitants could not endure it.

Their violence was also dealt with on the "other side". On being brought back for another lesson these refractory spirits complained of having been kept in a dungeon. It appeared that, in accordance with a certain psychic law intelligent spirits could impose a condition of restriction around an ignorant spirit similar to imprisonment, an impenetrable, cell-like enclosure from which there was no escape. As soon as they showed repentance and willingness to adapt themselves to their new conditions they were freed and helped along the road of progress. This is the short history of how Dr. Wickland and his wife became missionaries of the dead. They founded first the Psycho-Pathological Institute of Chicago, and later, the National Psychological Institute of California, where, in the portals of two worlds, they still carry on their heroic work.

Nor are they alone in their undertaking. For theirs was no new and unique discovery. Rescue circles of spiritualists carry on similar missions all over the world. With very difficult cases they may not be capable to cope, but they teach and preach, they parley with the dead, and frequently bring the light of understanding into their life. Occasionally they clear haunted houses, and now and then succeed in curing cases of obsession.

The problem of obsession has been the subject of special scientific study for the past twenty years at the James Hyslop Institute of New York. The Institute was founded by Prof. James J. Hyslop, of Columbia University, an American pioneer of psychical research. In a chapter on obsession in his *Life After Death*, he writes:

"I fought against it for ten years after I was convinced that survival after bodily death was proved. But several cases forced upon me the consideration of the question."

Before his death Professor William James, the greatest psychologist of America, surrendered to the same belief.

"The refusal of modern enlightenment," he wrote, "to treat obsession as a hypothesis to be spoken of as even possible, in spite of the massive human tradition based on concrete experience in its favour, has always seemed to me a curious example of the power of fashion in things scientific. That the demon theory (not necessarily a devil theory) will have its innings again is to my mind absolutely certain."

Last year Dr. Titus Bull, the Director of the James Hyslop Institute, published a small book: *Analysis of Unusual Experiences in Healing Relative to Diseased Minds and Results of Materialism Foreshadowed*. Under this unassuming title, in a cold and dispassionate manner, astounding and stupefying discoveries are submitted to an unheeding world.

Dr. Wickland's experiences were published as early as 1924 under the title *Thirty Years Among the Dead*. It is a book crammed with thrills, dramatic incidents and poignant emotions. One of its revelations concerns Harry Thaw, the eccentric American millionaire who, for no earthly reason, killed Stanford White, the famous architect of Madison Square Gardens, New York. According to Dr. Wickland, he was a psychic sensitive "unquestionably obsessed by avenging spirits who desired retribution for real or fancied injustice done to themselves or kindred". This is how the conclusion was reached:

"On July 15th, 1906, several weeks after the tragedy occurred, a strange spirit controlled Mrs. Wickland during a psychic circle, and she fell prostrate to the floor. Placing the form of my wife in a chair, I began questioning the controlling intelligence.

"The stranger strenuously objected to being touched, brusquely demanded to be left alone, and called out:

"'Hey, there, waiter! Bring me a drink.'

"'What kind of a drink do you want?'

"'Bring me a whisky-and-soda, and be quick about it.'

"'Who are you?'

"'None of your business who I am.

"'Where do you think you are?'

"'In Madison Square Roof Garden, of course.'

"'What is your name?'

"'Stanford White, if you have to know.'

"Holding one hand on the back of his head, on the right side, and clutching at his chest and abdomen as if in great pain, he cried:

"'Have a waiter bring me that whisky-and-soda!'

"I was about to ask further questions when the spirit's attention was attracted to some invisibles, and he began to tremble with fear.

"'Are you seeing dead people?' I asked.

"He nodded his head violently, then shouted: 'They're after me!' and, jumping from the chair, ran to a corner of the room in an effort to escape.

"His agitation was so great that he lost control of the psychic and was gone.

"Immediately another spirit took possession of the psychic and in great excitement began to walk back and forth, exclaiming exultantly:

"'I killed the dog! I killed the dog! There he lies!' - pointing at the floor toward the spot where White had lost control. 'The dog! I have been looking for a chance to kill him for several years, and got him at last! The dog!'

"I forced the spirit to sit down and learned that his name was Johnson.

"'I killed Stanford White,' he boasted. 'He deserved death. He had trifled too long with our daughters ...'

"He was followed by a third entity, but this intelligence was aware of being a spirit, temporarily controlling a borrowed body.

"'I am Harry Thaw's father. Save my boy! Save my boy! He is not guilty. Harry will not be electrocuted.' (Later events proved this to be true)... 'He was obsessed by revengeful spirits when he killed Stanford White. I have tried to reach the external world by every possible avenue to tell the people that Harry is not insane, but that he is a psychic sensitive.'"

No one can be reasonably expected to accept without personal experience, statements of such crushing implications as the above, but Dr. Wickland is no maniac. He spent thirty years in this investigation, and through the same channels of approach many brilliant minds reached conclusions similar to his own.

Can it be that an immense volume of human experience should spell nothing but the word "humbug"?

Professor William James answered the question as follows:

"The spirits, if spirits there be, must indeed work under incredible complications and falsifications, but at least, if they are present, some honesty is left in the whole department of the universe which otherwise is run by pure deception. The more I realize the quantitative massiveness of the phenomenon and its complexity, the more incredible it seems to me that in a world all of whose vaster features we are in the habit of considering to be sincere at least, however brutal, this feature should be wholly constituted of insincerity."