

DFE – Dark Force Entity

A NOVEL

BY TERENCE J. PALMER

Terence J. Palmer

30 Ash Keys

Crawley

West Sussex

Tel: 01293 611915

Mob: 0782 671 8690

palmert55@gmail.com

Synopsis

Dark Force Entity tells the story of how James Parker, a spiritual healer, part-time hypnotherapist and truck driver encounters dark forces and the spirit entities that influence human beings.

Following a lifetime of failed relationships and business ventures, James Parker embarks upon a new career as a hypnotherapist, using his knowledge and natural healing skills to bring relief to the suffering. When he meets Marie he finds what he believes to be a woman with whom he can reconcile his past failures and become what he always wanted to be – a family man. His compassion and vulnerability lead him to discover a realm of human experience that openly challenges the modern secular world-view of materialistic determinism. His journey of discovery as a spiritual healer takes him through mystical experiences as a hermit in the mountains of Crete to the romantic Bay of Naples where he encounters the Divine in human nature and to the high passes of the Swiss Alps where he first encounters the demonic. James breaks the code of ethics of professional therapists and enters into an emotional and physical relationship with Marie. This brings his hard-won therapy career to an end and he commits himself in total to Marie as her partner and applies all his skill and knowledge to helping her overcome the consequences of earlier abandonment and childhood trauma. James fathers a son for Marie, a son she had yearned for since she had three daughters, and is devastated when she rejects him. With his career and professional relationships in tatters James retreats in order to find answers for Marie's actions.

What James Parker ultimately discovers is that several worlds exist in parallel – the world created by each of us from within our own minds, the world of the collective and the two worlds of the transcendent – good and evil as both experienced and denied by ordinary people in their ordinary lives. Inspired by true events taken from case notes, this book explores the fuzzy and confusing relationship between mental illness and the influences of an unseen world or spirits and demons. What James discovers is the scientific evidence for the existence of angels and demons. This is a story of how deeply-rooted scepticism is challenged and overcome by experiences that are ultimately foolish to deny.

A novel of powerful emotions and moral purpose, DFE is a story that explores the paradoxes of love and betrayal, trust and distrust, disbelief and denial.

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Part I

Unconscious Incompetence

We may *think* we know, but we do not *know* what we do not know.

Only a fool thinks he is wise (Socrates 469 –399 BC).

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Chapter 1

James Parker and the Seven-Year Cycle

'It's going to be a warm one' thought James Parker as he parked the truck and walked to his car for the journey home. It was 5.30 a.m. on a bright August morning in the Year of our Lord 2000, and he had just finished his nights work, from Rochester up to Birmingham and back with a 40-foot overnight parcel trailer. The drive home would take him forty five minutes, then he would have enough time to have a spot of breakfast, bath and shave, and get his notes ready for the morning's work at the clinic and the hospital. Clinic started at 8.45 with the first patient arriving at 9. He would see three patients and then get to the hospital by 12.30 where he was conducting a research project for his doctorate. He would finish at the hospital by about 2 and go straight home to bed before getting up again at 5.30, eat and head up to Rochester for another night trunk to Birmingham.

James Parker had an honours degree in psychology, was a certified hypnotherapist, was researching for his PhD, and he drove trucks. A strange mix of professional activities you may say, but the hypnotherapy didn't provide enough for a living yet and the research was costing him his own money until he could get a grant, so he had to drive trucks to make ends meet. He was 53 years old, divorced and lived alone in a one-bed ground floor flat. He lived only for his work as a therapist and his objective to be awarded his doctorate. He worked nights for a driver agency usually from Monday to Friday, but sometimes at weekends, and had nights off prior to attending the clinic as and when required by his friend and colleague Dr. Samuel Weston. He did his practical research at the hospital on Fridays and Saturdays again with Dr. Weston. The rest of his time was his own to sleep, read and write up his clinical and research notes, punctuated with a couple of pints at his local after church, and Sunday lunch with his daughter and her family. Apart from a sporadic and sometimes intrusive love life in the form of Penny, his life was pretty routine, and to most who weren't interested in psychology, perhaps a little dull and boring. That was all there was to know about Mr. James Parker, but it hadn't always been as dull and routine as that, and it was about to change again. Over the coming months James Parker's life was about to be turned upside down.

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James left the yard and headed down Blue Bell Hill towards the M20. Traffic was already starting to thicken on the M20 on its way to London, but James was going the other way; in the opposite direction. 'Going against the flow,' he reflected, was something he had done in the past, or so it seemed. 'There's going with the flow, and then there's running with the herd,' he reminded himself as he approached the speed limit with nothing to get in the way. He wasn't running with the herd. That was going the other way. But where was the flow taking him? His thoughts began to wander as he dropped the car into high gear and his mind drifted into neutral. He was in highway hypnosis. A natural state often experienced by long distance drivers when the conscious mind drifts off into a kind of day dream whilst the subconscious goes onto automatic pilot and takes control of the driving. The idea of going with the flow took him into a reverie of other times and other places.

He had been a truck driver after he came out of the army, then progressed to transport manager and eventually to transport consultant. He had also been an entertainment promoter, an advertising agent, a conference and exhibition organiser, and a hermit living in the mountains of Crete. His adventures and experiences had been wide and varied; from being acknowledge by his peers to being thrown into an Arab jail and deported. He had been a consultant for the United Nations in Africa and had worked as a waiter in a Greek taverna. Now he was a hypnotherapist and student researcher. His experiences had changed dramatically every seven years or so, give or take six months either way, through a series of cycles. There had been high points and low points to each cycle, and there were crisis points too. One thing remained constant though. He could always earn a living by truck driving. This was the common thread and his security.

He had been twenty-eight years old and driving a truck across the Saudi Arabian desert when this realisation of seven-year cycles occurred to him. It had been an interesting observation and he had concluded that he was being influenced by a naturally recurring cycle that he had no control over. James needed to understand how it worked and whether it was controllable or predictable. These were the same questions that philosophers, scientists, historians and economists had been attempting to answer for centuries. James Parker was none of these. He was an ordinary man trying to do his best to make his way in the world without the benefits of a formal academic background or financial independence. He didn't know it at the time, but he was following a path of

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discovery that was not designed by him. He had identified several types of cycle. There was a physical one, an emotional one, a mental one and a creative one. He had also identified in the world around him a political one and an economic one. He even took the time to read into the past and actually identified a shape to history in the form of cycles in the rise and fall of civilisations and empires. He identified that each cycle had a peak and a trough, and a critical point that heralded a change from one cycle to another. He arrived at the tentative conclusion that everything that could be observed or experienced could be understood by seeing it as part of this universal cycle of events. For James' own personal experiences, each cycle had limits and boundaries that confined their influence to within James's capacity to accommodate their effects physically, mentally and emotionally. He saw natural progression and personal development as 'going with the flow' of the naturally recurring cycle. But there was another cycle of influence that was still a mystery to him, and he often found himself musing as to its nature and its influence, not only on his own life changes, but on his understanding of the world he found himself in. He was to learn that this cycle was the one that stretched boundaries, and even went beyond them.

By the time he had reached the Ashford exit James had been reminded what it felt like to run outside of the main herd, influenced by his own cyclic changes and going with the flow. There didn't seem to be any stability or predictability, but amid the apparent chaos there was definitely a pattern. He just wanted to know where it was headed.

He was gaining on a convoy of heavy trucks on their way to the channel tunnel and the ferry ports, trundling along at a governed speed of 56 miles an hour, nose to tail like a herd of elephants. His conscious awareness took over once again from his automatic pilot as he checked his right rear view mirror and indicated to pass them. He checked his speedometer to register that he was still cruising at exactly 70 mph.

James arrived home at 06.15 and let himself in with the anticipation of a relaxing soak in the bath. The moment he was inside the door he switched on the radio tuned into Classic FM, turned on the bath water and put the kettle on. He stripped off while the kettle boiled, adjusted the bath temperature, made his mug of tea and took it with him to the bathroom. He stepped into the bath and sat down to sip his tea. This was his time: Time to let the dust of the road wash away and listen to a nice piece of classical music - heaven.

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But the reverie that was started on the motorway by his thoughts of going with the flow was still only just below the surface. The strains of *Pachelbel's Canon in D* drifted into the bath room and he slipped down into the warm soapy water to make the mental transition from truck driver to healer.

Each seven-year cycle that James Parker experienced brought him to greater heights of ecstasy and greater depths of despair. As he was getting older, the roller coaster was getting rougher and wilder. He thought that maturity was supposed to bring wisdom and success, but all he could see was that he was being thrown from one crisis to another - from the heights of achievement to the depths of failure. During one such cycle, between 1985 and 1991 his computer exhibitions business collapsed and he lost his soul partner, the beloved Julia. Escaping to a simple life in Crete seemed idyllic at the time. He found space to breathe, and to stand back to see the bigger picture, and he discovered a peace within himself that he had never known before. He had learned the true value of isolation and tranquillity. He lived the life of a hermit in the mountains and people would come to him with their problems, locals and tourists alike. Without any form of teaching or training from an adept or master of any kind, James Parker was a natural comfort to his fellow humans in trouble. What he hadn't realised at the time was that with each cycle, as he traversed its peak and trough, his trials and tribulations became harder and his failures were to become more traumatic. Each time he traversed the critical point of a cycle the emotional energy created became greater and greater. As his own emotional pain increased with each revolution, so his compassion and empathy for others increased in equal measure. The more pain he experienced so the stronger he became. Just as a Samurai sword is heated and beaten a thousand times to give it its strength and its edge, so James Parker was being beaten and tempered in preparation for something yet to come.

His studies, research and efforts to establish a viable hypnotherapy practice bring him to this day in August 2000, and he thinks that by now he knows where he is headed. His friends and family think his life is routine and uneventful. But he is on the cusp of another cycle, and this one will take him further and deeper than ever before. This one will take him to the edge - and beyond. This one is the boundary breaker.

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'Yes,' he thought as he climbed out of his car at the clinic car park, 'It is definitely a warm one.' James arrived at the clinic at five minutes to nine with just enough time to take off his jacket and wash his hands when the receptionist announced to him on the internal telephone that his first patient had arrived.

Amanda Fernandez was huge. James could find no other way to describe the frame of the 25 year-old woman who waddled into his consulting room. She was six foot six tall and so obese that he didn't dare risk putting her on the scales. He had visions of the chair collapsing under her huge bulk as she accepted his invitation to sit down. Under the enormous face he could see that she was really a very beautiful young woman and she spoke with a delicate child-like voice that did not fit the frame she filled. It was obvious why she was referred to him, but he had to stick to the protocols as he took down her basic details for the record.

'What can I do for you Amanda?' he asked.

'I'm fat,' she said tearfully. 'You name it and I have tried it. Diets don't work, exercise doesn't work, and psychotherapy doesn't work. I have even had my jaws wired together to stop me eating, but absolutely nothing works. I am at my wits end and I don't know what else to do. You are the last resort. Can you help me?'

It was a plea from the depths of her soul and it touched him. He felt her pain and anguish as he began to explain the procedures he used.

'Before I can answer that question we have to see how well you are able to go into an altered state of consciousness. That's a trance,' he explained. 'Then we have to see how well you respond to suggestions. If you are a good subject for hypnosis then rather than give you direct suggestions to lose weight we have to find out the cause of your obesity. But before we begin can you tell me why you think you are overweight?'

She misinterpreted his question and replied, 'Look at me. I'm huge. Nobody should be this big. I feel like a freak. I have difficulty doing everything; getting dressed, moving around, even cleaning myself.' She began to get tearful so he stopped her.

'I'm sorry,' he said. 'What I meant was, what do you think is the cause of your overweight?'

'I really don't know', she replied. 'I have always been fat. I mean I have never been anything other than fat. My earliest memories as a child are of being bigger than anyone

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else at school. My mum says I was born fat. How can I possibly know what caused that?' He detected a note of annoyance with him in the tone of her voice.

He was anxious that he should immediately restore rapport between them in order to proceed. Without rapport there can be no chance of success with hypnosis. So he quickly explained, 'The reason I ask this question is because we have two minds; the conscious one that we are using now to have this discussion and an unconscious one that is beyond our awareness. When I ask a question like the one I just asked you, I am asking the conscious mind. But when I ask the unconscious mind the same question we should get a different answer.'

She listened with intense interest and he went on, 'We use our conscious mind to analyse things, solve problems and make decisions, but the unconscious part of our mind works in a different way. It stores information and controls things that are beyond our conscious awareness. For example; you don't have to think about breathing or heartbeat or putting one foot in front of the other when you walk. Do you?' She relaxed as he spoke and listened with intense interest. He had already started the trance induction process and as he spoke the tone of his voice changed imperceptibly to a gentler, soothing one.

'No,' she replied.

He had the attention of her unconscious mind as he suggested to her, 'The ability to go into trance depends on how well you are able to relax.' She nodded, and in a short time he had succeeded in inducing a good level of trance. Then he brought her back to full conscious awareness and asked her how she felt. James had developed a method of trance induction, through much practice and trial and error that incorporated both direct and subliminal suggestions of peace and tranquillity. The induction itself was of enormous therapeutic benefit to all his clients, and for some of them just learning how to do it for themselves was enough to help them deal with the everyday stresses of modern living. As Amanda emerged from her trance her face was transformed into one of experiential delight. 'I feel absolutely wonderful,' she said.

'That's what it feels like to be hypnotised,' he told her. 'You respond very well. Now let's see if your unconscious mind has the answers we are looking for.'

Amanda slipped beautifully back into trance and James began his investigation; 'I am speaking to your unconscious mind Amanda. Your unconscious mind has much more

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knowledge than your conscious awareness has and is much wiser. It knows all there is to know about you. I don't want you to look for answers - they will just come. What we need to know originates beyond your conscious memory, so it would be futile to try and remember - just let it come. On the count of three you will find yourself in another time and another place. You will find yourself in the time and place where the cause of the problem originated - one, two, three - you are there.' He gave her a moment to adjust to her experience and then asked, 'Can you tell me where you are?'

'No,' she replied in a faraway little voice.

'What can you see?' he asked.

'Nothing,' she replied.

'OK, then tell me what you are experiencing.'

'It's dark,' she said, 'and warm, and cosy. I like it here.'

She had regressed and was in her mother's womb. Now he needed to know what caused the obesity. 'Something caused the problem here Amanda. What was it?' he asked, and she began to cry. It was a silent cry, but the tears flooded down her cheeks as her huge frame began to quiver with silent deep sobbing. 'Can you tell me why you are crying Amanda? What is it that is disturbing you?' he asked.

'I don't know,' she said as her sobbing continued, 'but I feel so empty.'

'Do you know what is causing this empty feeling?' He prompted.

'No,' she said as the tears flowed fast down her cheeks into big wet patches growing on her blouse. He had reached a dead end for now and after calming her down and bringing her back to a state of relaxed tranquillity again, he brought her out of the trance.

Something had seriously disturbed Amanda when she was being carried in her mother's womb, but with an undeveloped intellect the unborn child was unable to interpret the meaning or the significance of the experience. He needed to know what happened, so when she had recovered to full consciousness he asked her, 'When your mother was pregnant with you do you have any ideas about what she was experiencing?'

'I have never known my grandmother because she died when my mum was pregnant with me,' she said. Straight away James knew the answer.

'And tell me this; what kind of birth did you have, was it easy or difficult?'

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'Oh, apparently it was terrible. My mum had a terrible time. I was two weeks late and very big. I even had a full head of hair and long nails on my fingers and toes.'

Now James had the full picture. The emptiness that Amanda experienced as an unborn child was the grief that her mother experienced with the loss of her own mother. Because mother and child share the same emotions during pregnancy, what the mother feels so does the child feel. With this knowledge, James reintroduced Amanda back into trance for the resolution of the problem. Because the unborn child has no understanding of its experience in the womb the resolution technique involves a dialogue between the unborn child and the adult that it has subsequently grown into. It's as if a voice talks to the child to explain to it why it feels the way it does. James reflected on why it is so important for mothers to talk to their unborn children.

During this dialogue between the unborn Amanda and the grown-up one it emerged that the unborn one was reluctant to emerge from her mother's womb at the appointed time because she didn't want to come out into a world where there was so much emotional pain and emptiness. She stubbornly stayed there using all the mother's resources to feed on until she grew hair and nails and the nutrition supplied by the mother ran out. Amanda was born feeling both empty from her mother's grief and starving through lack of nourishment. She was born big because she was late and she spent the whole of her life trying to fill the nagging emptiness by eating. Amanda's problem was thus solved with satisfaction. About three months later Amanda invited James to her wedding. She was able to get into the wedding dress that was her dream.

James's next case that same day was Deborah Collins. She had been diagnosed with a disease of the nervous system called Dystonia and Doctor Western had referred her for hypnosis to help her come to terms with the disease emotionally. This was Deborah's second visit. During the first one, seven days previous, James had introduced her to her trance and had taught her how to do it herself. Then he had taught her how to detect the precursory sensations that precipitate an attack. The effects of her condition meant that she had involuntary spasms that resemble a seizure, but the spasms were confined to the right side of her body and she didn't lose consciousness as one did with other conditions like epilepsy. He taught her to recognise the onset of an attack and to go into a trance to

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escape it. She also learned how to hold off an attack until she was in a position to go into trance, for example if she were driving or socialising with her friends.

'Hello Deborah,' he greeted her, as he offered her a chair. 'Come and sit down and tell me how you have been getting along since last week.'

'It's quite amazing,' she said. 'Not only can I escape from the attacks, but they are less frequent and milder. I feel as if I have control over them.'

'Good. And how do you feel about that?'

'That's what it's all about isn't it? Control I mean. We all need to be in control of our lives, and when something like this happens we lose it.'

'Yes,' he said. 'It's all about control. We all have the gift of free will, but when we get sick our free will is compromised. It's frustrating and can be very upsetting. Our aim is to regain control so that we can exercise our own free will again.'

As he spoke to her a part of his mind was reflecting on the concept of free will as a God given gift to humans beings. He was being reminded that first and foremost he was a spiritual healer. His gift for healing had been discovered whilst living in Crete, but he tended to forget this because of his academic and scientific education. But his education in the arts of healing had begun with the discovery that he could remove physical pain simply by putting his hand over the affected part. His experiences in Crete had enabled him to progress from simple things like headaches and insect bites, and as he developed his skills he found himself treating more serious conditions like chronic back pain and even multiple sclerosis. By going to university he learned how the mind affects emotions and set off on the new path of healing these facets. As Deborah was talking he reminded himself of his physical healing abilities, and on an inspirational impulse said to her, 'I want to try something if it's OK with you. I am going to stand behind you and I don't want you to go into trance, OK?'

'OK,' she said, as James rose from his chair and stood behind her.

'Now,' he said. 'Let's see if we can detect the point of origin of these attacks. Where do you think they originate from?'

'I don't know,' she replied.

'Last week we learned that the first signs of an attack were detected with a small tremor in the top of the right arm – right?'

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'Yes,' she answered.

'Then it spread down the arm and up to the neck and face?'

'Yes.'

Deborah's attacks not only took control of her arm so that it went rigid and waved about, and contracted the muscles in the right side of her neck to twist her head to one side in a painful contortion. But the most distressing feature of them was that they also contorted the right side of her face into a grimace resembling a gargoyle. She lost control of her mouth and dribbled. Coupled with the contorting of her neck and the waving of her right arm, her right cheek slapped against her teeth like a dog's when it shakes its head.

James placed the palm of his left hand about an inch from the nape of Deborah's neck and asked her to focus her attention on the top of her right arm, and then said, 'You have learned how to control an attack – right?'

'Yes,' she said.

'So if you had an attack now you would be confident about your ability to control it – right?'

'Yes.' she replied.

'Good, I am going to invite an attack if that's OK with you. By doing this we may be able to detect where it originates. Ready?'

'Ready.'

'Now tell me what you experience.'

'I feel a little twitch in my right shoulder blade,' she said. He moved his hand over the spot.

'Tell me what's happening?' He asked. There was a pause and a mild tremor passed down her arm and up her neck. Tell me what's happening.' He repeated.

'I don't like to say,' she said. 'I feel silly.' He was intrigued.

'Please don't be afraid to tell me what you are experiencing. Go on,' he urged her.

She had to force herself to say the words, 'It's really weird.'

'What's weird?' he asked.

'Well,' she began tentatively. 'It's like something horrible is coming away. It's black ... like like. No, I can't say. It's silly.'

'Never mind,' said James. 'Go on. Tell me what you see.'

'It's like black bats coming out,' she said.

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'Let it happen. Just allow yourself to relax and let it happen. When we experience something unpleasant we tend to go tense. Just relax and let it find its own way. By deciding to relax when you experience discomfort is another way of being in control. Let the negativity go and release it out of your body,' prompted James. He waited until the weird sensations had finished, removed his hand from its position over her shoulder blade and resumed his seat in front of her. 'How do you feel?' He asked.

Deborah was in a state of amazement and she was trying to understand what had happened. In answer to his question she asked him, 'What was that?'

James didn't fully understand himself. He had never experienced anything quite like it before, but he had to give her some kind of explanation. 'Well,' he began. 'All disease can be viewed as negative energy. Our perceptions of negative energy can take various forms depending on how our imagination works. Imagination is a very powerful aid in overcoming disease and distress, and what you did was to use your own imagination to visualise the negative energy that is causing your condition.'

It was a satisfactory explanation, he thought, and one he could accept himself. But was it the right one? This was a precursor of what was to come, and the transition from one cycle to another had begun. But James didn't know that yet.

Chapter 2

Love for Julia

Shortly after Deborah had left the clinic, the receptionist brought James a mug of hot coffee and the news that his third patient hadn't shown. This is what troubled him most about trying to develop a hypnotherapy practise and earn a living from it.

Sometimes a patient failed to turn up for an initial appointment and at other times they failed to maintain a prescribed course of treatment. He thought it was probably due to the fact that the local Health Authority didn't make financial provision for hypnotherapy as a prescribed treatment and patients had to dip into their own pockets. People had become so used to the fact that medical treatments were provided free of charge on the NHS that they couldn't come to terms with having to pay for it themselves. In addition to this, the East Kent area is not particularly affluent and the marketing potential to the well off and open-minded section of the local community was very limited. Even referrals from a general practitioner like Samuel Weston who strongly advocated complementary therapies were not enough to enable James to conduct more than two half-day clinics per week. And when two or three of those referred failed to show - well it was a bit of an uphill struggle.

James sipped his coffee and started to write up Deborah Collins' notes in the patient record. It was not a requirement for him to keep patient records for Dr. Weston because technically they were his own clients when the doctor referred them on, and the treatment they received from him was not required in the official patient notes for the surgery. But he liked to keep his own paperwork up to date and report patients' progress to the doctor. He pondered on how to present Deborah's experience, bearing in mind that a doctor was going to read it. He decided to present it the way it was without making any comments or assumptions on what he witnessed. But it made him think....

The absence of his third patient and the thoughts that had occurred to him during Deborah's session gave James the opportunity to reflect back on his therapy career roots.

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Some pretty weird things had happened in the beginning. They seemed weird then, but as James experienced more and more in those early-days things seemed less weird. Just after he had returned from a consultancy project in Sudan, someone had told him that he was a healer. 'No', he had replied with incredulity. 'I'm a business man.'

'Well you will be then,' came the reply. The person who had told him this asked him to sit down whilst she placed her hand behind the nape of his neck, just as he had done with Deborah Collins. Almost immediately he felt a burning on the back of his neck, just like an infrared heat-ray lamp. It was so intense that he moved his head away from her hand sharply.

'Just as I thought,' she said. 'You are a conduit for healing energy, and because you don't need to receive it yourself you are repelling mine. The two positive energies coming together are creating the heat.' He didn't know what to think. Part of him wanted to scoff and brush it aside, but another part of him was intrigued. After all, there needed to be some explanation as to why his arthritis had never bothered him. He had been medically discharged from the Army after only seven years service and told that he would be crippled and in a wheelchair by the time he reached the age of forty. He knew that the arthritis existed because the medical examinations to justify his army pension confirmed that he had it, but he felt no pain or discomfort at all.

James spent that weekend with Julia, and decided on an experiment. He asked her to sit on a chair and then placed his hand behind her neck, just as the healer had done with him. Immediately Julia jumped and arched her back.

'What the hell was that?' she exclaimed.

'What was what?' he asked her.

'What did you do to me?'

'I didn't do anything,' he said. 'I didn't even touch you.'

'Well something did,' she said. 'It felt like an electric shock down my spine.'

'Did it hurt then?' he asked.

'No,' she said. 'It was so unexpected and strange, but very nice. Can you do it again?' She asked him. He asked her why and she told him it felt a bit like an orgasm, but in her back.

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Later that evening he gave her a similar sensation, but this time it wasn't caused by his hand and the sensation wasn't in her back.

Julia's father had passed on some years earlier and now her mother was failing fast with diabetes and an amputated leg. She needed a lot of support at this time and she began to develop minor aches and pains. James wanted to find ways to help her relax and deal with her anxieties. She was a willing subject as he experimented with this new and mysterious energy that flowed through him. On one occasion she went into a very deep form of relaxation that she found extremely pleasant, and as she emerged from a trance-like state she commented, 'You hypnotised me.'

'No I didn't,' he said. 'I never said a word. I don't know anything about hypnosis.'

Julia was convinced that she experienced something out of the ordinary, and took it upon herself to go to the local library. She brought James two books on the subject of hypnosis and handed them to him. He read them with interest and after discussing Julia's experience with her he arrived at the conclusion that she had been under the influence of a hypnotic trance. He had hypnotised her without realising it, and what was even more intriguing was that he could do it without talking.

Julia had been James' dream come true. They were about the same age and had come from very similar backgrounds in the South London of the fifties with both their fathers being bookie's runners. They were introduced to each other by mutual friends and clicked immediately. She was divorced with two teenagers living with her in the family home in Maidstone. They spent alternate weekends together. He would spend a weekend with her in Maidstone and the following week she could escape the kids and relax in Folkestone. Julia had been living a somewhat lonely and isolated existence until James came along. He lived in a charming 200 year old cottage in a quiet backwater in the middle of town right next to an old fashioned traditional village-type pub. All at once Julia had someone to care for her and she joined him in his active social life.

One day he asked her what her idea of paradise was, and when she told him he took her there - to Southern Turkey, with its miles of golden sands and stunning sunsets. She had never been abroad before and between them they experienced their first romantic fantasy. James had worked hard for the past seven years building a successful

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transport consultancy and exhibition business and meeting Julia put the icing on the cake. He was a truly happy and contented man.

Shortly after meeting Julia, James had been selected to go to Africa on a consultancy project for the United Nations. He missed Julia terribly and couldn't wait to get home to her, but when he did finally arrive home he found a 15% interest rate, his house had negative equity and an economy in freefall. His business went into liquidation and he had to go back to square one to find a means of earning a bread and butter income.

This couldn't have happened at a more inconvenient time for James and Julia's blossoming love. Julia's mother died, and at this time when economic chaos ruled and James needed time to regain a sense of direction, she needed all the emotional support he could give. James' entire world was collapsing like a house of cards and he felt an immediate need to do something, but he had no idea what to do. Two major calamities; the loss of his business and Julia's loss of her mother were a bit too much. James knew that sooner rather than later he would lose his lovely home when the mortgage company came to repossess his house. As if in another world of his own creation James bought a van, packed a sleeping bag and his guitar and headed south as far as he could go - to the Greek Island of Crete. It seemed like a very callous thing to do when Julia needed him most, but he was not a callous man and he loved Julia deeply. It was as if he was being driven by a compulsion - not to escape, but to find something. Or was he being drawn to the island?

These events had heralded a dramatic and traumatic shift from one cycle to another.

It was when he was on his way to Crete that the next strange experience occurred. He was on the ferry from Ancona to Patras, sitting in the coffee lounge with his guitar when a Greek crewmember came and sat at his table. The man looked around him furtively as he asked James if he could sit there. James asked him why he seemed so nervous and he told him that he wasn't really allowed to sit with passengers, but he needed a break from the engine room.

The crewman told James that he liked to play the guitar too and asked if he could try his. James handed the sailor the instrument and he began to finger a chord with his left hand. He winced with pain and put the guitar down.

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'What's the matter?' asked James.

'My hand hurts,' replied the crewman. 'I trapped it in a machine a few moments ago below in the engine room. That's why I came up here.'

'Another opportunity for an experiment,' thought James. He asked the crewman to close his eyes so he couldn't see what he was about to do, and to lay his hand on the table. The crewman looked at him puzzled. 'Go on,' prompted James. 'I won't touch you, I promise.' He gave an encouraging smile to the crewman who obliged by putting his hand on the table and trustingly closed his eyes. James placed his hand hovering over the crewman's. After just a few moments he opened his eyes and raised his damaged hand in front of his face. He turned it around then looked straight at James.

'How did you do that?' he demanded.

'Do what?' enquired James.

'The pain has gone. How did you do that?' he repeated. James didn't know how he did it and told the crewman so.

'It's a mystery to me,' he said to the crewman. 'But its good isn't it?'

James sipped his coffee as he pondered these early experiences. There was a link between the healing energy that moved through him and the altered state of consciousness known as trance. Some things happened all by themselves without any intervention or suggestion from James. All he had to do was establish the link between himself and the patient and the energy that flowed through him did the healing. James speculated that consciousness and imagination had something to do with it as well, but it was only speculation. 'What is the actual nature of consciousness?' He mused.

His coffee had gone cold and he glanced at the clock on the wall. It was 11.45. He thought he may as well get off over to the hospital for his research, even though it was a little early.

As well as being an independent GP and owner of the clinic where James practised, Samuel Weston was also an acupuncturist and the endoscopy surgeon at the local hospital. James had known him since his very first year at college when he was taking his entrance exams for university. Because James only had one GCE 'o' level and his army certificate of

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education (ACE) he needed to take the equivalent of A-levels in biology, psychology, sociology, English, maths, I.T. and counselling at the regional technical college. Part of this preliminary education was to have practical work experience. Dr. Weston kindly agreed to accommodate James and allowed him to participate in every single patient consultation for a week, provided they had the patient's consent. Only one 13 year old boy refused. James was given the opportunity to demonstrate his healing and hypnotherapeutic abilities there and then. Up until that time he had only been given the opportunity to develop his skills with willing friends and family, except of course for his previous experiences without supervision or training in Crete. Dr. Weston, although trained in the use of hypnosis himself never had the time to fit its use into his overburdened schedule. He therefore welcomed the opportunity to see how it could work for those patients that he would have used it on himself if he had the time.

Dr. Weston's trust in James overwhelmed him and together they witnessed some truly remarkable results. With his confidence in James's abilities well established, Samuel Weston had no reservations in offering him the use of a consulting room for rent at £20 per half day and referring those patients with chronic physical or emotional disorders to him. All during the following three years whilst James studied for his degree in psychology he attended the clinic and administered to the doctor's patients. A solid and reliable relationship built between them based on mutual trust and respect.

In James' final year at university he had to complete a research project. Dr. Weston had been experimenting with the use of acupuncture as an alternative to diazepam sedation for his endoscopy examinations. An endoscope is an instrument with a small camera lens on the end of a flexible tube that is passed into a patient's digestive system to look for diseases. An upper endoscopy looked at the oesophagus and stomach by being swallowed by the patient, and a lower sigmoidoscopy looked into the bowel via the anal opening. These minor procedures could be conducted whilst the patient was wide-awake and not sedated, but it was extremely unpleasant for some and impossible for many. Therefore to administer the tranquilliser *diazepam* was the accepted procedure. James and Dr. Weston had often discussed the possibility of using hypnosis as another alternative for patients to choose from, and as a final-year research project for James' degree, the doctor agreed to allow him to conduct a clinical trial.

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This initial trial was a success. James got a good mark for his final year and he and Dr. Weston had their research findings published in a medical journal. The publishing of the findings was a real bonus for James. It meant that he had contributed to medical science before even being awarded a doctorate. His confidence in his own abilities together with the trust and support from Dr. Weston enabled James to apply for his doctorate at London University and they continued with the project.

James arrived at the hospital half an hour early. The two endoscopy-unit nurses were there busily making their preparation for the arrival of the doctor and their first patient.

'Morning ladies,' said James as he walked into the outer preparation room and removed his jacket.

Two female voices in unison responded from inside the operating theatre, 'Hello James, you're early.'

'Had a no-show at the clinic,' he replied. 'Fancy a cuppa?'

'Ooooh yes pleeaase,' came the harmonious reply.

He always made them a mug of hot tea. It saved them the trouble of having to do it themselves when they needed to concentrate of making sure everything was ready. Dr. Weston was prone to arrive in a bit of a rush. He would sweep into the unit, shedding his coat as he came, and like a whirlwind arrive in the theatre ready for action and expecting everything to be on the ball and primed. Having someone else make the tea was a welcome relief to the nurses.

James poked his head round the door of the theatre where they were busy. 'How many today?' he asked.

'Six upper and three lower,' came the reply from Sue, the unit staff nurse and senior of the two.

'I'll get the forms through to sister and put the kettle on then,' he said to her.

'Good man,' she said and carried on with her preparations.

James went to the copy room and copied nine complete sets of the trial forms, one for each patient and made his way to the day-ward where there was a little kitchen on the

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side. He put the kettle on and stepped onto the ward. 'Fancy a cup of tea sister? Kettle's on.'

'Yes please. Got your forms with you?

'Yep. Here they are.' He offered them to the ward sister as he entered the ward and she put the patients' names and dates of birth in the appropriate place and returned them to him. There were half a dozen people sitting along the wall of the entrance on the other side of the ward from where he entered. They all looked anxious and tired, and when he entered the ward they lifted their gaze towards him with the premature belief that he was the one who was about to stick something down them or up them, as the case may be.

'This is Mr. Parker,' announced the ward sister before any further misconceptions could develop in their minds. 'He is doing some research with the doctor and he has a form for you to look at.'

'Good morning all,' James greeted cheerily as he crossed the ward towards them. 'I would like you to read this please. It is an invitation to participate in a clinical trial we are conducting on the quality of patient care in this unit. You will see that you have a choice of how you can reduce your anxiety or discomfort during your medical examination. You can have the procedure with sedation, acupuncture, or hypnosis, or if you prefer with nothing at all. It's entirely up to you.' he continued as he handed out the forms.

'Let me know which of them choose hypnosis,' he said to the sister as he passed her the remaining forms for those still to arrive, and made his way back to the boiling kettle.

Only one of the nine patients had opted for hypnosis for his upper gastrointestinal endoscopy examination. James introduced him into trance and gave him direct suggestions:

'You are aware of everything going on around you. You hear what the doctor and the nurses ask you to do without any reservations. You are in good hands and you are able to relax completely. You are able to swallow easily and without any discomfort. Nothing disturbs you. When you hear the word 'calm' you are completely calm and relaxed. You are aware of the instrument and you feel no discomfort. The word '*calm*' is a command to your entire nervous system to become just that - *caaaalm*. Every time to hear the word

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calm you become more and more calm and nothing disturbs you. When you are touched on the forehead like this,' James touched his forehead, 'you go into a deep, deep state of relaxation and nothing bothers you. On the count of five you return to full waking consciousness feeling perfectly fine and normal in every way, one, two, three, four, five - eyes open and wide awake.'

James gave the patient time to recover to his normal waking consciousness and then brushed his finger across his forehead. The man dropped straight into a deep trance. He had confirmed that the patient had accepted his suggestions and would be fine. After bringing the patient back to normal awareness James reassured him and left to return to the operating theatre.

Dr. Weston was in the middle of an upper tract examination as James entered. He looked up, peering over his instrument and asked James, 'All OK?'

'Yes,' said James. 'He'll be fine.'

When Dr. Weston had finished his examination of the patient on the operating table he handed the endoscope to Carol, the junior nurse, for cleaning whilst Sue, the staff nurse tended to the patient who was slowly coming out of her drugged state. He and James retired to the preparation room adjacent to the operating theatre, and he began recording his findings for the patient's GP. James waited patiently for him to finish. This was about the only time he had a chance to talk to Samuel. He was always rushing around between his surgery, the hospital and visiting his patients, and he never had the time for formal meetings. James had to time it right in order to get Samuel's attention if he wanted to discuss anything of importance. 'Any news yet on the funding of this research?' he asked.

'I have had a letter from the hospital's administration, but I haven't had a chance to read it yet,' Dr. Weston replied. 'Remind me before we leave and we'll see what they say. Is your hypnosis man ready?'

'Yes,' replied James. 'Do you want him now?'

'Yes please. Get sister to wheel him in.'

James went to the ward and asked the ward sister to bring the patient, a man in his mid-fifties, and she escorted him from the day-ward with his clinical notes to the prep-room. Dr. Weston introduced himself to the patient and asked him to sign the procedure

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consent form and the research consent form, then led the way to the operating table. The patient then came under the care of Sue, the staff nurse, and she asked him to lie down on the table. Like most patients he was nervous, and the ward sister would have recorded the levels of anxiety prior to the examination in the day ward. Sue reassured the patient as she clipped the oximetre cable to his right index finger. 'This tells us how much oxygen is entering your blood.' she told him. 'And it tells us about your heart rate. OK?'

The patient nodded and allowed Sue to adjust the oximetre cable so it didn't get in the way. Doctor Weston waited, instrument in hand, until Sue had finished settling the patient and smiled at him.

'Are you ready?' he asked, and the patient nodded.

'Ready as I'll ever be I suppose.'

Both he and Dr. Weston looked at James in anticipation. James stepped forward and stroked the man's forehead. The patient's eyes closed and he drifted off into his tranquil world. James nodded to the doctor who then asked the patient to swallow as the instrument was placed at the back of his throat.

'Just swallow as if you are drinking a cup of tea,' said the doctor, and the man swallowed the instrument.

James picked up his clipboard with the patient's data form and began making his recordings; start time, oxygen saturation levels, heart rate, ease of intubation, etc. As the instrument passed down towards the stomach, the patient's heart rate started to rise and he became fidgety. There was always a danger that a reflex action by the patient could cause him to try and pull the instrument from his mouth and jump up off the table. Everyone was attuned to this possibility and their senses picked up the slightest degree of distress. Sue was at the patient's head, holding it at the right angle for the instrument and to reassure him, whilst Carol was attending to the doctor's future needs with biopsy sampling equipment standing by.

The patient's heart rate rose to 100 beats per minute and Sue spoke to the patient, 'It's all OK, you are doing very well. Just relax.' The heart rate rose to 105, 110. 'He's getting very agitated,' she said, and Doctor Weston stopped looking down the eyepiece.

He looked at James and asked, 'Is he OK?'

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James had been waiting for Sue to use the cue word 'calm' in her reassurances to the patient, but she hadn't said it so far. The heart rate rose to 117 beats per minute and the alarm sounded.

'Tell the patient to be calm,' James whispered into Sue's ear.

'Be calm, it's all right, just relax,' she said to him. Immediately the patient's heart rate dropped like a stone to read 90 beats per minute and stayed there. Sue's jaw dropped open and her eyes popped as she saw the reading on the heart rate monitor and the patient's head became heavy in her hands. 'Bloody hell!' she exclaimed. 'I have never seen anything like it.' Doctor Weston resumed his examination to completion.

When the whole list of patients had been completed and all the instruments had been put into sterilisation they all retired to the prep-room for a cup of tea. This was the time when they could relax and enjoy a bit of friendly banter. Sue commented, 'Did you see that heart rate drop? I couldn't believe it.'

'That's the power of direct suggestion,' said James. I gave the patient what's known as a post-hypnotic cue. When the cue, which was the word *calm*, was given then he responded to it immediately.'

'Amazing,' said Sue. 'Absolutely amazing.'

The nurses finished their tea and returned to the endoscopy unit to finish putting away the equipment. Dr. Weston opened his briefcase and withdrew a letter. James waited patiently. He had waited patiently for a very long time. Since the very first trial for his finals at university had been completed two years previously, they had improved and enhanced their methods to arrive at a very high degree of accuracy in recording data for the project. In the meantime James had passed two interviews with *London University* and had secured approval and supervision with a senior hypnotist for his PhD and had been offered a post-graduate research place. His acceptance by *London University* was one of those very rare peak experiences that one has in one's life. The last one James had was when he was appointed by the *United Nations* to go to the Sudan in 1990. At that time he couldn't reconcile the fact that the peak experience of going to the Sudan was immediately followed by the total collapse of his entire world.

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James's objective in gaining his doctorate depended on two things; a grant to cover his living expenses and tuition supervision fees and agreement from the local area health authority for him to use their patients and their hospital resources. The letter that Dr. Weston opened was from the administrator of the clinical effectiveness department, in response to James's submission of the pilot study report and a request for support for the project. Without this support there would be no research, no London University and no doctorate.

All correspondence regarding the project was channelled through Dr. Weston's practice where it was less likely to get lost in the system than at the hospital. Dr. Weston read the letter aloud:

"Dear Mr. Parker,

Thank you for sending me a copy of your report, which I found heavy reading. I would like to see an executive summary written in plain English. I think it would be worthwhile summarising the very clear outcomes you found from your research. It is always better if someone like me can immediately switch to a bulleted list of results / recommendations / outcomes.

I wish you well in the future and hope you achieve your ambitions.

Yours sincerely"

Without actually saying a clear and categorical 'no' to James's request, the last sentence said it all.

James and Samuel looked at each other in disbelief. 'That is a very rude letter,' said Samuel.

'The NHS is full of very rude people,' said James. Although his objective was to be a doctor of psychology, he had no intention to be a part of the NHS. He despised the bureaucracy and the internal politics. James empathised with all those caring professionals, the doctors, nurses and consultants whose mission in life was to heal the sick, but were forced to submit to political and financial pressures from above. He had been passed from pillar to post in his attempts to get his project approved for his

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doctorate, and he had found to his amazement that trying to find a way through the bureaucratic maze was much, much harder than doing the actual research itself. And it was making him tired.

'What do you suggest we do now?' he asked Samuel.

Dr. Weston hunched his shoulders, turned down the corners of his mouth and spread his hands in a 'how do I know?' sort of gesture. James sat with his elbows on his knees and although his eyes pointed towards a spot on the floor, they weren't focused on anything. He began to feel a futility for all the hard work he had put in since 1994 when he first enrolled for his studies to become recognised for his natural healing abilities. It was now 2000. Six years of mental torture and patience had just been dismissed by the ignorance of a hospital administrator.

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Chapter 3

A Very Special Gift

That night, as James drove up to Birmingham he tried hard to check his frustration and his anger. Here he was; still driving a truck for a living at the age of 53 after having been through all those other changes and challenges. He was an experienced transport manager and consultant, he had a natural leaning towards helping his fellow man with sickness and he had the ability to go the full distance and get his PhD. He had knowledge, experience and an understanding of the world that was beyond the normal everyday imagination of the majority of his fellow drivers. Yet here he was still doing what he was doing to earn a living when he had been only twenty two years old. He felt deeply embittered at the waste and the futility of it all, and he resented having to continue with driving trucks for a living. He knew he was worth more than that, and he decided that he was not going to be a truck driver all his life. After all, it wasn't through the lack of trying, or a lack of ability that kept bringing him back. He began to feel that time was running short and he could feel the anger rising from the pit of his stomach to his chest. He breathed deeply to disperse the energy around his body and decided he couldn't give up now. This avenue may be closed but there had to be another one. There was absolutely no way he was going to do this for the rest of his life. He aimed the truck forwards along the M6, brought his mind back to conscious awareness from automatic pilot and handed the problem over to his sub-conscious to solve for him. He listened to the music on the radio and identified the piece playing - Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity from the Planets by Gustav Holst. 'Must be the evening concert,' he thought. 'Shit, I've missed Mars and Venus.' He settled down to listen to the rest of the suite, and by the time he reached his destination at 11 p.m. he was back into relaxed mode as a professional truck driver.

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Under normal circumstances, James would have attended the endoscopy unit at the hospital for his research at 10 p.m. on Saturday morning. But with the news that the project wasn't being supported there didn't seem any point. It was a pity because over the past three years he had become a part of the endoscopy unit team and everyone knew and accepted him as part of the team. All the nurses, who took turns in the endoscopy unit, together with all the nurses whose shifts changed on the day-ward, and even the senior consultant surgeon came to know James well. The research programme had actually become a habit, not just for James but all the others as well.

At first it had been very hard for any of the nurses to accept changes in their routines by having to take readings, issue forms and record extra information for James's project. It had been an exercise in patience and diplomacy, as well as practical application of some psychological techniques that he had learned in how to encourage others to respond to change. Eventually all the nurses had relinquished their resistance to change and had accepted requests from James to help him with his research. The fact that the senior consultant surgeon and the senior ward sister supported his work must have had a lot to do with their acceptance and compliance. However, as time marched on they all enjoyed working with James and they all came to like having him as part of their team. He was tempted to carry on as part of the habit, a bit like the man who retired from work but still left the house every day to go to work because he couldn't get out of the habit. Not going to the hospital every Saturday and letting his research project go was going to be a wrench. On the other hand he could have a lie in on Saturday and surface from the Land of Nod when his system had rested enough. There was no doubt about it; James was beginning to get very, very tired with the kind of tiredness that makes one weary.

The weariness was still with him when he awoke at midday the next day. Normally he would have been at the hospital now and would have spent the afternoon entering the data from the past two days and looking at the statistical significance and interpretations of the findings. But today James had time to himself. It seemed very strange to him. His research project had been his creation, like a baby of his own, and it was going to die. He dragged himself from his bed to put the kettle on and run a bath, as he wondered what he would do with the empty time that the research had occupied.

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He made his tea and sat in the bath. Then it hit him like a punch in the guts. He had never had the time to grieve the loss of his beloved Julia because he had been swept along firstly by the force of events in Crete, then his focus on his studies at university and then the research. These activities had taken up all of his time and energy for the past seven years, and suddenly, with the loss of his research there was a void. There was an emptiness that triggered the deep emotional loss that he had not had the time to express when he discovered that Julia had married someone else. But the time had now come to let go of all that emotional energy. He released it there and then, in private and in full – and his heart broke.

James Parker did not like loose ends, so that afternoon he entered the last batch of data from the last day and looked at it. Then he closed the file and put it away in his filing cabinet as he considered the possibility of going out for a breath of air. Just then he caught a glimpse of Penny as she passed the window and knocked the front door.

Penny always swept in like a storm force wind and gushed around the place with incessant chatter. She was a very attractive woman and looked a lot younger than her age, which was the same age as James. They had met at church when James had returned from Crete and when Julia and he had finally gone their separate ways. Penny had stepped into the physical space that Julia had vacated, but she had never taken Julia's place in James's affections. In fact James's relationship with Penny had always been a bit of a game, with his capture being the objective and Penny being the huntress. With Penny he was always on the defensive.

She had been fun to be with at the start, but James had soon realised that Penny was a drain on his energy and his time. He actually called her a 'time-thief' at one point and demanded that she give him space to breathe. For six years now James had been trying to get Penny to take another direction and let him go his own way, but she just simply refused to listen.

After the events of the past couple of days, Penny demanding his time and energy was the last thing James needed, but he always found it near impossible to be rude to her

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and ask her to go away - no matter how hard he tried. On those rare occasions when his frustration pushed him into it she would just brush it off anyway and say, 'You know you don't mean it.'

James was a very good hypnotist and a very understanding and empathic therapist, and he had used his skills often in an attempt to get to the bottom of Penny's emotional drives and needs. He would get so far and then he would realise that she was only playing a game with him. He never openly challenged her fraudulent posturing directly, but allowed her the freedom to continue to protect her vulnerability in this way. However, on one occasion he did catch her off her guard and he asked her what she was most afraid of. She gave some plausible answer, as we all do in response to such a question, but James knew that it was not a truthful answer. But his strategy was to set a trap, and she walked right into it. 'What are you most afraid of then?' she asked him.

'Do you really want to know?' he asked her. 'Are you sure you really want to know what I am afraid of?' he repeated. Penny knew by his tone and his sincerity that what she would get from him was the truth. She knew that James was as honest about his emotions as any man she had ever met. This was part of the attraction. With James Parker what you saw was what you got.

'Yes,' she replied. 'Tell me.'

He hesitated. She had walked right into the trap he had set for her and now he was about to spring it on her. 'What I am most afraid of,' he began with some trepidation, 'Is that when the time comes for you and I to go our separate ways - you will not have the resources you will need in order to deal with it.'

He felt awful as he watched her face crumble before his very eyes. This was why it had taken so long for him to get his message across to her that he saw no future in them as a pair. He hated the idea of causing pain to anyone. He had hated being a witness to Julia's pain when her mother had died, and he had hated himself for not being able to comfort her at that time. The very idea that his going to Crete when she needed him most had caused her pain was too much for him to contemplate. He despised the very idea that he could be a cause of pain to anyone with such vulnerabilities. He despised himself now because he had made Penny cry. But it was the price he had to pay for making her hear

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the truth. Too many people live a lie and pretend to be in relationships that are not meant to be.

By her response to his statement of what he feared most, James knew what Penny feared most - being alone. The idea was such anathema that it was not acceptable to her. She therefore recovered her composure, ignored the fact that her vulnerability had been exposed, and carried on as if nothing had happened. 'What shall we do tonight?' she asked him with a saucy smile and batted her eyelids. He hated it when she did that. It was contrived and unnatural. Penny was wearing her mask again, but a time was rapidly approaching that would rip that mask from her face and another side of Penny would be exposed to James that he had never dreamed existed.

'Are you all right?' asked Penny when she detected that James wasn't quite himself.

James drew on his inner reserves and replied, 'Oh I'm OK. A bit disappointed that's all. The hospital administration are not supporting my research and I'm feeling a bit low.' She sympathised with him, knowing how hard he had worked.

'Why don't we go to the pub and relax a bit?' she said. 'It'll do you good to unwind.' He didn't really fancy the idea, but it did make sense. So that's what they did.

The next few days slipped by with James trying come to terms with the idea that he had lost his opportunity to go to London University for his PhD. But there was no way he was going to give up, and settle for driving to Birmingham and back every night for the rest of his working life. As he headed on up the M1 his thoughts wandered to a case he was dealing with that intrigued him, and that he needed to find a solution for.

Sarah was in her mid-thirties and in her second marriage. She had one daughter from her previous marriage and she suffered from chronic depression. James had learned that it saves a lot of time if an investigation into the cause of a problem is embarked upon as quickly as possible rather than going into a detailed history first and then trying to work out what the problem is from the history. James had found through experience that the direct route to the cause of a problem was always through the subconscious, but with Sarah this had not been possible. He just could not get her into an altered state and he

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could not get her to relax. He had tried every technique known to him to get her into a trance but without any success, and he had run out of ideas.

Driving long distances at night was the ideal job for thinking or studying. As a young man with a family, when James had wanted to progress from driving to transport management, he had to sit a series of five examinations over a two year period. But because he used his driving time for mental revision he was able to pass all exams within six months. The ability to focus one's attention on a problem whilst the subconscious drove the truck was a trick that James had been using for a very long time, and it was very useful. When James pointed the truck in the right direction for his destination, his mind wandered the highways and byways of hidden consciousness to learn other things. But when the solution to a problem was not forthcoming then he would turn the procedure around. He would return his conscious awareness to the road and let his unconscious processes provide him with an answer to his question. The question usually had to be a specific one, but often an inspired thought or a piece of new information would pop into his mind without any kind of prompting on his part.

One of the most significant and far reaching experiences that James had in Crete was to do with this business of asking questions and getting answers as if by magic. He had been driving then, but in his van up the mountainside to his campsite. As he was driving along a thought came into his mind. It was his name - James. It wasn't a voice talking to him - it was just a thought. It wasn't like being called by name by someone. No - it was just a name. Not his name, but just a name. James.

He arrived at his remote campsite in the mountains by a bubbling stream shaded by wild figs, olive and lime trees. He parked his van as close as he could get to his camp and walked the rest of the way, over an ancient Roman bridge into his sanctuary. The tranquillity of this place was palpable, and the moment anyone stepped across the old Roman Bridge they became aware of a kind of enchantment. It was indeed enchanted, but James had only recently arrived here and he was still not aware of the significance of the place. He could smell the wild herbs and hear the loud chorus of the cicadas as he approached his tent, and an irresistible impulse gripped him. He went to his tent and rummaged around his bags until he found what he was looking for - a book that was given to him as a gift from a very special friend, Renate who lived in Germany. He had stopped

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off on his way from England to Crete just to say hello, and she had given him this gift. It was very special to her and she wanted him to have it. It was her Bible, and it had notes written in the margins and verses marked out in highlighter all the way through it. Renate hadn't just read this Bible, she had studied it.

Renate had wanted James to pray with her before he continued his journey, but not being a religious man he declined the offer. He didn't realise it at the time, but his decline to pray with her had hurt her deeply. She cared for James. They had been friends for many years and he had rescued her from her deep grief when her husband had died suddenly. She had given him her most treasured possession and asked her God to guide him and keep him safe on his journey. James had no idea what was going through Renate's mind or what she was feeling. In his naiveté he accepted the gift just to please her and continued his journey in total and complete ignorance. A man lost and trying to find his way with no idea where he was going. In the picture-book language of the ancient Tarot, he was The Fool - innocent, naïve and very vulnerable.

James found Renate's gift to him and it fell open in his hands at the Book of James. He couldn't believe his eyes as they fixed on the page and read the title and the name in large black print, "THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES". He recovered his senses and began to read the part that had been highlighted in yellow marker:

5. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given to him.

6. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord (James, 1:5-6).

James was stunned. He sank onto his haunches and stared at the page in front of him, not knowing what to do or think.

He had been asking himself since arriving in Crete, 'What the bloody hell am I doing here?' He had left his beloved Julia to grieve for her mother alone, and here he was living in paradise with no responsibilities and nothing to do. And now this. 'What the bloody hell is going on here?' He asked himself out loud. In so doing, he had spoken a

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question. He had asked for wisdom. And now he was being told how to ask. His spiritual awakening was about to begin. He was blind and in the dark, and his journey had begun long before this. He just hadn't known it yet.

By the time James came face to face once again with Sarah he still hadn't received an answer to his question, 'How do I get this woman into trance?' His skills were being tested and he didn't have the answers - yet. So he began his enquiry by interviewing her about what troubled her. He learned that she'd had a stillbirth sixteen years earlier. At the recollection of this event in her past Sarah broke into tears. She still hadn't come to terms with this loss and it was still affecting her deeply. James was not a psychotherapist or a professional bereavement counsellor, so he didn't feel qualified to deal with this situation, but something was urging him to prompt her further. He was pressing on a boundary out of curiosity more than anything else, and wanted to know why this woman was so troubled after such a long time.

'Tell me,' he began. 'How did you feel at the time about the loss of your baby?' She stopped crying and he watched her face go stony. She sat upright in the chair and straightened her back.

'I was angry,' she said as she stared unblinking at an imaginary spot in front of her.

'With whom?' asked James.

'With *HIM!* He should have *known!*' She spat it with a venom that caused James to be quite taken aback.

'With whom? Who should have known what?' He asked her.

'The doctor of course,' she replied as if it was obvious who she should be angry with. 'He should have known there was a risk. I had pleurisy and he should have known it and he should have taken precautions. But he didn't and my baby died.'

James looked at Sara and watched her cold, emotionless face. He didn't know what to say next. Sara continued in a new matter-of-fact tone of voice. 'He had to suffer too. It was his entire fault and I wanted him to know what it feels like. So I wished the same thing to happen to him. His wife was having a baby too. And she lost hers just like I did. Now he knew how it felt.'

James was having a little trouble believing what he was hearing. He heard himself say, 'Did that make it alright then?'

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'No,' said Sarah. 'After all, it wasn't his wife's fault was it? It was *his* fault, and something should have happened to *him* - not to her. He should have lost an eye or a leg or something.'

James sat in stunned silence. He couldn't believe what he was hearing, and he couldn't believe the coldness with which she said it. It was like another person sitting there. One minute he had been talking to a woman who was expressing a powerful emotion, and the next he sat opposite a cold and unfeeling one.

James's questions had led to other questions and he began to realise that he was entering into an arena that he was not at all familiar with. It was time for some research reading before he could understand the processes that were at work with Sarah. Her coldness was one thing. A cold and unfeeling façade was often a mask to hide real feelings that were too strong or too painful to deal with in the open, and he could understand the reason for her depression. That was caused by anger that still hadn't been resolved and satisfactorily expressed. But what troubled him most was the simple fact that Sarah had wished something towards another person and that wish had come true. This was outside of anything he had read in the realms of psychotherapy and psychology. This was the stuff of curses. But this was not fantasy or fiction. What James had witnessed was a normal human being who had been through a traumatic and emotional experience, and through a need for revenge, she had cursed someone and caused another family severe harm, even to the death of a child.

Some very serious research reading was called for, but where was James to start? He remembered being told at school by one of his teachers, a Mr. Van Heerden from South Africa, that curses and black magic only work if you believed in such things. Van Heerden had said that it was the *belief* that was the power behind the curse. In modern medicine and psychology this belief is what has become known as the placebo effect and is always acknowledged and taken into account in clinical trials to test medical remedies. There is no doubt that beliefs are a very powerful form of influence on human behaviour. But no, not in this case. The doctor's wife who lost her baby had had no contact with Sara and could not possibly have known of any thought or feeling that Sarah was having at the time. There was another explanation; and it was not coincidence. There were two principals that James had to investigate in order to get to the truth of this, firstly the nature of evil, and

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secondly the power of a directed thought. But surely this was in the realm of science fiction or fantasy. Wasn't it?

The first book that James came across in his search for an answer to this puzzle was written by an eminent psychiatrist by the name of M. Scott Peck. It was entitled *The Road Less Travelled* and set out to explore the relationships between human love, traditional values and spiritual growth. This was the first book that James had discovered where at last a scientifically trained psychiatrist was actually acknowledging the spiritual dimension of human experience.

The act of willing the death of a child, as witnessed by James during his interview with Sara, was judged by himself to be evil, and M Scott Peck had something to say about evil:

Because most of us have been graced by an almost instinctive sense of horror at the outrageousness of evil, when we recognise its presence, our own personalities are honed by the awareness of its existence. Our consciousness of it is a signal to purify ourselves. It was evil, for instance, that raised Christ to the cross, thereby enabling us to see him from afar. Our personal involvement in the fight against evil in the world is one of the ways we grow.¹

On reading this passage, James was transported back to Crete. He had no idea what he was experiencing at the time he was in Crete, but since he had returned and had been educated in the science of psychology, and had gone into therapeutic practice, all the experiences he'd had in Crete were beginning to make sense, albeit very slowly as time passed by. In the beginning he had been shown how to relieve physical pain simply by placing his hand over the affected part. The pain disappeared without his knowing how or why. Then he had progressed to understanding emotional pain, more through his own experiences than anything he had learned at university. Now it seemed as if he were being taken to a new dimension - into the darker workings of the human spirit. His experience with Sara triggered his recall of some of his Cretan experiences as his mind wandered back to that time and place:

¹ {Peck 1978:299}

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She had been like a light in the dark, a beacon of friendship on a strange and foreign shore. Sophia was Greek but had been married to an American and had lived in America for some years. On her divorce she had decided to return to Greece; not to her home in the Peloponnese, but for some obscure reason to Crete. A very attractive 50 something, she had made James welcome at the small taverna in the village in the mountains where he had found his peaceful little campsite. Sophia always had a smile on her face and a friendly welcome for all who passed through the village and stopped at the taverna. Sophia and James soon became friends and with his van he had helped her with the tasks of collecting stores for the taverna from the town down the mountain on the coast seven kilometres away. Their friendship was strictly platonic. He was still in love with, and very attached to Julia back home in the UK, but Sophia saw in James someone she could trust.

Time passed in the idyllic village up in the mountains, and James became known to all thirty-five of the villagers whose homes were scattered and hidden amongst the olive and orange groves, and he came to hear the local news and gossip of the village. The local people did not like Sophia. She presented herself as a Catholic whereas the locals were all Greek Orthodox. She painted her face with makeup and made herself look attractive to the men, whilst at the same time she wore a full-length black cape and a huge crucifix hanging from her neck. When she went to the church in the town on the coast she would make an open exhibition of herself by walking down the main aisle and in front of the entire congregation she would prostrate herself in the shape of a cross in front of the altar. The local people did not like this at all and they were suspicious of her.

James was warned by people to be careful whom he associated with, and taking their advice he kept his distance from this woman as far as was practical.

The locals' distrust of the Sophia woman grew until she was eventually thrown out of the village. She came to James' campsite and asked if she could stay with him. He'd had many visitors and guests stay with him at his enchanted campsite, some of them had been young women who had been left destitute by unscrupulous or alcoholic boyfriends. He had helped them and treated them with respect and when they had recovered sufficiently he helped them on their way. There was one such young woman called Anna that he was

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caring for at the time. But he was reluctant to accommodate the evicted Sophia, so he asked his friend Manolis in the town if he could recommend a place for her to stay. Manolis not only found her a place to stay but also gave her a job in his harbour-side cafe so that she could pay the rent.

James was making preparations to return to England to sort out some of his unfinished business affairs, and to see Julia again. He agreed to take Anna with him because she had been left stranded by her boyfriend without any money and she had no way of getting home. Another Englishman, Dave, who had come to live in Crete with his wife and two children also wanted to return to the UK to collect his car and drive it back to Crete. They were planning their journey at Manolis café when Sophia came and sat with them.

‘Oh, are you going to England then?’ she asked.

‘Yes,’ replied James. ‘Just for a visit. I have some business to attend to, David here wants to collect a car and Anna needs a lift home as she has no money.’

‘Would you have enough room for me then?’ asked Sophia. ‘I have to get back to the States to collect my divorce settlement and I don't have enough money to fly from here to Athens, and then to London for the connection to America. Can I come with you?’ she pleaded.

James and the other two; David and Anna, all looked at each other. Then James looked up to see Manolis beckon him from inside the kitchen. James excused himself and left the table to go to see what Manolis wanted. ‘What is it?’ he asked.

‘If she wants to go to America then you take her. We need to get this woman out of here.’ said Manolis.

‘Why? What for? Is there a problem Manolis?’

‘Yes there is,’ came the reply. ‘She isn't trusted here. She is telling people that the villagers on the mountain tried to kill her and threw her out of the village with violence. She goes around showing everyone her bruises, and then there's the business with the children.’

‘What business - with what children?’ asked James with a rising degree of concern. ‘Manolis what are you talking about?’

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'She offers to look after children when their parents are busy, but they have learned that she is trying to change their religious beliefs. You know the people here are very strict Orthodox and they don't like the idea of someone trying to teach them different. You have to get her out of here before they do something to her.'

James got the message. He went back to the table and sat down. The other two looked at him and David said, 'What did Manolis want?'

James didn't answer, but turned to Sophia and said, 'You want to go to England with us?' He looked at the other two in turn. He had asked the question as if to say to them that he had already made up his mind to take her. Before she could answer he said, 'OK, we leave on Tuesday morning early. We have to catch the ferry from Chania to Pireas. It's a five day journey to England. Pack only what you will need and keep it light.'

Chapter 4

Encounter on a Swiss Mountain

The journey took James and his three passengers from Paleochora on the South West Coast of Crete across the White Mountains to the port of Chania in the North. From there they caught the ferry to Piraeus; the ferry port just outside Athens on the mainland of Greece. The crossing took twelve hours overnight and after an uncomfortable night sleeping on benches in the passenger lounge they disembarked at Piraeus where they took breakfast in the town. Then they had to drive across the Corinth Canal and along the Northern Coast of the Peloponnese, which was the home of the woman Sophia, to the port of Patras to catch the ferry to Ancona in Italy. This journey took the best part of another day, and by the time they had embarked on the ferry to Ancona they were all in need of the good night's sleep they were to receive in the comfortable cabins of the ferry.

The ferry crossing from Patras to Ancona took thirty six hours, which gave James and his passengers a chance to relax, enjoy the exhilarating ozone of the ocean and to talk.

Anna and David were a little unhappy at having to sit in the back of the van all the time, whilst Sophia enjoyed the comparative comfort of the front passenger seat next to James. It did seem a fair complaint and James had noticed that Sophia had been a little selfish in this respect. The back of the van wasn't too well ventilated and there were no seats. James was used to long distance driving and rarely stopped unless it was absolutely necessary. This meant that his passengers in the back had to suffer long periods without respite. James decided it was time for proper sharing of comfort and discomfort. He told David that he could take a spell of driving when they left Ancona and headed North, and he would take the passenger seat. This would mean that Sophia had to go into the back of the van. From then on they would all take turns in the passenger seat.

When the ferry docked at Ancona and everyone went to their vehicles ready for disembarkation, James unlocked the van and entered the passenger side. He leaned across and opened the driver's door for David to get in and handed over the keys as he opened

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the rear compartment for the ladies. He saw the look on Sophia's face. She had a face like thunder and looked as if she would explode in that instant. James looked straight at her and said, 'Come on, chop chop, we haven't got all day. We'll be rolling off in a minute.'

Maintaining as much dignity as she could muster, Sophia climbed into the back of the van and began to make a fuss over the business of making herself comfortable. She was furious but she knew she had no recourse to complain. Young Anna stepped into the van and positioned herself as far away from Sophia as possible.

From Ancona on the Adriatic they had to drive up the length of Italy and cross the Swiss Alps at a place high in the mountains called Andermatt. The journey had taken all day, and James and David had taken turns driving.

Anna never complained, but as the journey progressed James thought it only fair that she should have the opportunity to ride up front. He called a halt for refreshments, and after they had eaten some Gorgonzola cheese with Parma ham, pitta bread and expresso coffee, he offered Anna the front passenger seat. She was delighted and gratefully accepted, as Sophia silently seethed.

Andermatt was a fashionable ski resort in the Winter, but in the Summer all was quiet and rooms were available at a good low price. The party booked in with the two men in one room and the ladies in another. After a quick shower, James and David retired to the bar for some food and a quiet beer. After about half an hour had past Anna came into the bar and sat down with them next to James. She was crying. 'What's the matter?' asked James.

'I'm sorry,' said Anna, 'but I just can't take any more. I thought Sophia was my friend. She was so kind to me in Paleochora, but on this trip she has done nothing but pick on me. I can't put up with her any more. She's driving me crazy. I don't know what to do.'

James put his arm across her shoulders and ordered her a drink. 'She has to learn that she is no better than anyone else,' said James. 'And you have to learn to stand up for yourself. Tell her what you have just told me, but not from a position of desperation. Tell her from a position of strength. Tell her that you are not prepared to put up with her attitude any longer and to leave you alone.' He gave her shoulder a squeeze and said, 'Relax and finish your drink.'

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Anna finished her drink and went back to the room she shared with Sophia to finish what she had tried to begin, to have a shower and refresh herself after the journey. After a few short moments Sophia came into the bar and sat down beside James in the same seat that Anna had occupied. 'I really can't put up with that young woman any longer,' she said. 'I can't even have a bath in peace without her fussing around and complaining.'

James turned to her and said, 'Sophia. Please listen to me very carefully, because I want you to understand very clearly what I have to say. You are a guest on this journey, just as Anna is. You have paid no fare and you have been treated fairly and equally the same as the others. I want you to stop picking on Anna as if she is in your way. Please treat her with respect, because if you don't; if I have any more trouble with you this night I will leave you here on this mountain. I have no obligation to take you anywhere. I am doing you and the others a favour at my own expense and I expect you all to behave with respect to each other. Have I made myself perfectly clear?' Without waiting for her to reply to his rhetorical question, James continued, 'Now please make your peace with Anna and leave David and I to enjoy our beer.'

He turned away from her and waited for her to leave. She left without saying a word, and the two men breathed a long hard sigh.

James and David had a light supper in the bar without any further disturbance and started up the stairs to their room. As they neared the floor where the two rooms were adjacent to each other they heard a strange wailing sound. They looked at each other wondering what on earth could make such a sound in a ski lodge in the Swiss mountains. Their blood ran cold to the sound of the wailing as they stepped onto the landing and looked through the open door to Anna and Sophia's room. Sophia was sitting cross-legged on her bed and Anna was sat a few feet away on hers with a look of astonishment on her face. Sophia was wailing and rocking herself to and fro.

James and David stood in the doorway transfixed in disbelief. Sophia's wailing changed to a babble in a tongue that James had never heard before. It wasn't a language known to him from all his previous travels through Europe and the Middle East. This language didn't sound right, and as he watched with fascination, Sophia's face contorted into a grimace and her eyes rolled back until the pupils disappeared under their lids. David

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gripped James by the arm and James could feel him tremble. Anna was transfixed. But James experienced two unusual sensations. The first was a complete absence of fear. He felt the fear in David as he tried to get James away from the door, but James stood his ground and felt the second strange sensation rising through his entire body. He felt as if he were armed with a sword and a shield. His feet were rooted to the spot and he felt a tremendous power surge through his body. He felt fearless and invincible, like a gladiator or an ancient warrior. It was the most amazing sensation he had ever experienced.

After what seemed like a very long time, but was probably only a few moments, Sophia's babbling stopped and she returned to her normal self. Anna looked relieved and David released his grip from James's arm. They all looked at each other. Then James asked Sophia, 'Are you all right?'

'Yes,' she said. 'A little tired perhaps.'

He turned to Anna and wondered how she felt about staying the night in a room alone with Sophia. 'How about you Anna? Are you OK?'

'Yes,' she replied. 'I'll be all right now.'

'Good,' said James. 'Get a good night's sleep both of you. Breakfast at seven and we leave at eight. Good night.'

James and David retired to their own room and closed the door. 'What the bloody hell was that all about?' said David.

'I have absolutely no idea,' replied James. 'Get some sleep.' David got undressed and into his bed and James went to the door and opened it just an inch or so. 'Just in case,' he said in answer to David's questioning look. They slept undisturbed until 6.30 when the internal telephone gave them their wake up call.

Breakfast was a silent affair, with each absorbed in his or her own thoughts of the previous night. Sophia had been put in her place by both James and, in the privacy of their own room, by Anna. It appeared to James that Sophia's response to Anna's assertiveness had been her transformation into something that he had no understanding of. What still fascinated him was his own reaction to what he witnessed. It was as if he had experienced similar phenomena before, in another time and place but beyond his conscious memory. The total absence of fear and the feeling of invincibility fascinated and enthralled him.

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That day they travelled across the Swiss Alps, down into Eastern France and, instead of making straight for the English Channel, James turned to the North-East to make a diversion and visit his dear friend Renate in Germany.

James had long considered Renate to be, in his modest opinion, the most good of all the women he had met. He knew, from his knowledge of Renate's life and by her actions that she was by definition a 'good woman', in the true sense of the word. When he thought of Renate he thought of the word 'good', and he was reminded what the word spelled with one of the 'o's taken out - god. Renate was good beyond the normal meaning of the word. She was 'Good', and James often thought of her as an angel in disguise, or as a 'divine human being'.

She'd had no warning of their arrival. James and his vanload of passengers turned up on Renate's doorstep out of the blue, but she welcomed them all with open arms as if she had known them for years. If they were with James then they were OK, was her attitude. She made them welcome, fed them and gave them all a bed for the night. Renate had been a wife and a mother to four children in earlier years. But with her husband gone and all her four children grown up and living their own lives, she lived alone in a large house with room to spare for guests.

When they had all eaten and Renate had shown everyone to their rooms, she and James went for a quiet walk by themselves. Their relationship had been a strange one, but it had a magical quality to it. They had met in Sorrento, Italy when James had been attending a transport conference. Her eldest son Thomas had sent her there on holiday because she had, in Thomas's opinion, been grieving the loss of her dead husband for too long. 'You have to learn to live again Mother,' he had scolded her, and booked her on a bus excursion to stay at the same hotel where James's conference was being held. She had no choice and was packed off to enjoy herself.

James was dressed for a formal dinner and walked into the hotel lounge to meet with his pals from the transport press for a pre-dinner drink. Renate was sitting at the bar - an elegant woman, no - a lady, thought James when he saw her. He felt that she was out of place sitting at a hotel bar all alone. It made him feel uncomfortable for her. His pals hadn't yet arrived, and he and Renate were the only ones in the room. James offered her a polite, 'Good evening,' and turned to the barman to order his drink.

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'Good evening,' she had replied with reciprocal politeness. An attractive woman, thought James. German I think by the accent. "I am waiting for my friends, he said to her, 'they are not here yet and I don't feel comfortable to drink alone. Can I get you something?'

She smiled shyly and raised her hand in defence. 'No thank you,' she said. Just then the press pack arrived and James's attention turned to his friends. 'Have a nice evening,' he had said to the handsome lonely woman sitting by herself at the bar, and he felt sad for her as he joined his friends.

The very next evening, at about the same time as before, James walked into the same bar lounge. There was only one person in there. She sat on a sofa with her back to him and the door through which he had entered, and she was gazing at the incredible scene before her through a huge picture window that occupied the entire wall of the bar lounge. She was watching the sun set behind the volcano of Vesuvius across the Bay of Naples. James stood in the doorway as he too watched the sun setting on the most beautiful scene he had ever seen. They were both transfixed by the scene that was spread out before them through the window as the crimson red of the sun ever deepened as it lowered itself behind the volcano.

She had heard him enter the room behind her, and she knew who it was without having to look round. She had heard his footsteps come to a halt in the doorway and she knew that he too was watching the sun set behind the volcano. As the sun slipped below the rim of the mountain in a blaze of red, orange and gold, she turned her head to address him. 'I'll have that drink now,' she said. 'A tonic-water please.'

James went to the bar and ordered her a tonic-water and a scotch and dry-ginger for himself and returned to where she had remained seated. He offered her the glass and she offered him the seat beside her and they both turned their gaze back to the Bay of Naples, bathed in the golden afterglow from the sunset.

Many years later, and sharing a deep and lasting friendship, James had asked Renate what it was that enabled her to connect with him at that time in Sorrento. 'It was your eyes,' she had replied. 'You had the most beautiful eyes. They reflected the colours of the sunset over the Bay of Naples, and there was so much peace and compassion in them. I knew then that I could talk to you.'

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Renate had been the one who had first introduced James to Crete. She had a daughter who had gone there for a holiday, and much to the horror of her husband, had fallen in love with a local and decided to stay and marry him. Renate's husband had never been able to accept this and had refused to acknowledge her right up to the time of his sudden death by heart attack. Renate wanted to see her daughter again and to meet her Greek husband and their daughter, and her husband's family who lived in the mountains. She asked James to accompany her. That was when James's journey had really first begun. The very first time he had stepped onto the soil of Crete, in 1987.

Renate and James had left Anna, Sophia and David to themselves in the comfort of Renate's house. They walked arm in arm as good friends do, and she asked him what he was up to. He told her the reasons for his own trip back to the UK and the reasons for each of the others in turn.

'That woman is evil,' she said to him.

'What? Who is evil? What do you mean?' he asked her.

'The Greek woman,' she replied. 'She is an evil woman. You must have nothing to do with her.'

James recalled the previous night on the mountain in Switzerland and he began to understand. Not much, but a little. There was something evil about the woman. The locals in Crete didn't trust her and they wanted her out of the way. Even Sophia herself had reported that the Greek Orthodox Archbishop had called her evil, and she couldn't understand why. This is where James education about evil had begun, but there was still a long way to go.

James forgot about his PhD research as his mind focused on Sarah's case. He had been reminded of his first encounter with evil as it had been hidden behind a mask of goodness in Sophia. He hadn't known at that time what to do; only that he hadn't been afraid as David and Anna had been. If he was to learn how to help Sarah then he had to learn how to deal with this dark side that dwelt beneath the surface, or was it something else? Was it something that affected the individual from outside? Was it an evil force?

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The search for answers filled the gap that his practical research at the hospital had left, and he began to read all he could find on this mystery. The famous psychologist, Dr. Carl Gustav Jung was a good source of material about the 'shadow', or 'dark side' of the human psyche, but the Jungian material he had read didn't have the answers he was looking for. It was much later, when he was researching for his new PhD, that James discovered Jung's little-known writings on the subject, but at that time all he had access to was Jung's popular writings. Freud had been strictly an atheist and his theories didn't recognise the spiritual side of human existence. From what James was reading at the time, he concluded that Freud failed to acknowledge the significance of religious experiences and, as it appeared to James, he was a little too obsessed with aberrant sexuality. Eventually he found a book written by a Norwegian psychiatrist by the name of Dr. Hans Naegeli-Osjord, entitled, *Possession and Exorcism*. Here was a book with a content that shook James to the core. The sub-title was *Understanding the Human Psyche in Turmoil*, and it was here that he found a solution to Sarah's problem.

James had a consultation with Sarah booked for that week, and he telephoned her to ask if her husband would be bringing her to the clinic. She had replied in the affirmative, and when she arrived at the appointed time he went into the waiting room and asked her husband to join them. Sitting opposite them both, James explained.

'I have had to do a lot of research reading in order to understand the nature of the problem we are dealing with here, and I need you to open your minds to possibilities that you may find hard to accept. But please bear with me. This is new to me too.' Sarah's husband nodded and James sensed Sarah's discomfort in her defensive body-language. He was touching a nerve in her that began to trigger a defensive posture. 'Do you believe in God?' He directed his question to the husband.

'Yes,' he replied. 'We both go to church regularly.'

'Good,' said James. 'I want you to say the Lord's Prayer with me.' Sarah shrank back in her chair and began to show more obvious signs of distress.

Ignoring her reaction, James began and prompted the husband to accompany him in the prayer. Sarah was becoming increasingly agitated, and then James read another prayer that he had copied from the writings of Dr. Naegeli-Osjord:

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'In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, I give you a protective mantle against all harmful powers and forces which act internally and externally, and I give you the energy to be yourself again so that you can reach and accomplish the goals given to you by God. And I ask the, Archangel Michael, to come with his Godly assembly, and you too, personal guardian spirit, I ask you to take over this soul fully and completely so that these harmful forces must yield - whoever and of which kind they may be. If you are deceased, and have not become aware of your transition from the material to the non-corporeal world, know this: according to the understanding valid here, you are dead and do not possess a material body. You are clinging to a spirit still dwelling in a body and are disturbing this person. You must evolve into a new but only spiritual sphere. Let one of the angels of St. Michael guide you to where you will receive instruction and salvation. If you are of demonic nature, know this: you are also a creation of the Almighty. When the purpose given you has been fulfilled, namely to teach human beings the difference between Good and Evil, by His grace you too will return into the harmony from whence you came. But you must obey His orders. Let Him show you the place where you must now go. Do not lose time, you have no business here any longer because this human being belongs to the Good - belongs to Jesus Christ. Now I command you, disappear, yield, and leave, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Amen.'

As James finished speaking he wondered whether he had done the right thing. Here he was: a pragmatic therapist in a position of trust, giving a solemn prayer of exorcism. Did they think he was crazy? Sarah had been crying throughout the prayer, but now she seemed to be stabilising, and her husband moved to comfort her. 'Thank you,' he said to James. 'Thank you.'

A couple of weeks had passed by when James bumped into Sarah in the street and he very nervously asked her how she was. She smiled brightly at him and thanked him. She invited him to her home for a cup of tea and they discussed the episode as fully as their embarrassment and ignorance would allow. Sarah had accepted the notion that something other than herself had carried out her wish at the time of her anger, and now she was free of whatever it was. She felt free of the burden of her grief over the loss of her

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child. And James, as he left and began his walk home, pondered on this experience. 'Be careful what you wish for,' he mused. 'It might just come true.'

Different possibilities began to run through James's inquisitive mind. He had read somewhere that scientists had been investigating the power of prayer. Apparently two groups of seriously ill hospital patients were used in an experiment where one group were prayed for and the other group wasn't. The experiment showed that the group that was prayed for fared better than the group that wasn't prayed for. James hadn't actually read the research report himself so he didn't know the methodology used or the inferred mechanisms involved, but his mind began to form more questions that needed answers. For example, 'what form of energy is a prayer? How was the energy carried to the sick person? Was it being directed by the mind of the prayer giver, or was some form of messenger carrying it? If a prayer is delivered and carried out by a messenger, like an angel for example, then was a curse delivered in the same way? Were there entities that were the opposite of angels? Did angels exist at all?'

James's scientific mind was beginning to form hypotheses for testing. He had been converted in his mode of thinking from his spiritual experiences in Crete to a more scientific one by his university education. His healing art had become an object for analysis and scientific investigation. He had been seduced by science. He experienced the conflict between the deeply-rooted scepticism that our modern society had imposed on his belief systems and the subjective reality of mysteries that were being presented to him.

Chapter 5

The Paradox of Love

Two more clients were to fuel James Parker's curiosity about the power of thought and the emotions. But before these two cases emerged, he had to come to terms with his own dilemmas. He just couldn't get away from his objective to qualify for his doctorate. After all, what was the point of going to university in the first place? His recent expression of grief over the loss of Julia had made him realise why the doctorate was so important to him. It was because she had been his inspiration. He had left for Crete at a time when she needed him most and he hadn't known why. His realisation that this action had caused her pain was too much for him to accept at the time of their parting, but now he knew how much he had hurt her. He realised that his grief at her loss was not because she had married someone else - it was because he had caused her to be hurt. He had been the cause of pain in someone he loved dearly. That was why he had broken down when the research project had collapsed. The project was a form of atonement, or compensation for what he had done to Julia. His love for her and his regret at being the cause of her distress had to be expressed in something tangible. He had to make amends by dedicating his work to Julia. This was his driving force, and this is why he had caved in when the letter that removed hope of success had arrived. Without the PhD how could he show his honour to Julia, and how could he ever forgive himself? Until he had a chance to express these feelings in his work - work that had begun when he went away from her, he would never be able to forgive himself for the pain he had caused her.

James didn't need to be forgiven by Julia. She was happily married and kept very fond memories of her time with James. He had shown her paradise in more than one form, and she had learned a lot from him, about how to respect herself and her own needs rather than be a footstool to someone else, as had been the case in the past. She had learned what it felt like to be truly loved by someone, and she therefore had a yardstick by which to measure the integrity of any new relationship. Without James's influence she would not have married the right man. But she had forgiven him. She wrote to him and

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told him she was happily married and she wished him well with her last farewell. All James really had to do was to find a way to forgive himself. But until then he remained driven by the need to research and to try to heal human emotions in others.

Concurrently he had Penny's needs to contend with. Her demands on his time had been getting to be a little too demanding again. During his second year at university she had engineered herself into a position where she thought he would be dependent on her. He had tried to make ends meet on his meagre student grant by working as a part time hypnotherapist at Dr. Weston's clinic, and he had also taken a consulting room in Canterbury right across the road from the university. Above the consulting rooms in Canterbury there were apartments to rent, and rather than living with his daughter and her family, he had taken on an apartment. From here he could nip downstairs to his consulting room and administer to his clients, and walk across the road for his lectures and the university library. It seemed like a perfect solution at the time, but it turned out to be very, very hard to balance his finances and his therapy work with his student life. He had previously managed to detach himself from Penny and she had gone home to Wales where her family lived. She had landed a good well paid job as a live-in nanny in London, and one day, instead of going home to Wales for the weekend she decided to visit him in Canterbury. James was at a very low ebb and very worried about meeting his commitments to study and paying the rent on his apartment and his two consulting rooms. He had to market his services as a therapist, which interfered with his studies. When Penny arrived for the weekend she saw her opportunity and persuaded him to let her stay and share the rent. She argued that it would be more convenient for her to travel from Canterbury to London rather than from Wales. James could not see a way out and was persuaded.

He hated being dependent on her, but buried himself in his work to get his degree. Meanwhile the pressures on him shifted from having to make financial ends meet to reconciling his studies with Penny's demands for constant attention. As he neared his final examinations in his third and final year he approached breaking point. Penny had cooked him dinner as usual and they sat down to eat. He was tired and under exam stress, and she asked him what troubled him. He felt that she had had him trapped for the past year or so

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and he needed space to breathe. He told her with trepidation, 'There are three things I need to do.'

'What are those then?' she asked him.

'First I need to get these wretched exams behind me,' he began. 'Then I need to earn some money. I am sick to death of being skint.' In past times he had been a successful business man with a nice home of his own, a beautiful Daimler car and holidays abroad in exotic and romantic locations with a woman he loved deeply. Now he was a destitute student sharing rented accommodation with a woman whose needs he was unable to meet. 'Thirdly,' he went on, 'I need my freedom back.'

This had not been the first time he had told Penny that he saw no future for them as a pair, and it wouldn't be the last. After his exams had been completed, the very next day he packed his stuff and went to London to stay with his parents where he could find work and get back on his financial feet. He left poor Penny in emotional shreds.

He had spent the next year in London working as a truck driver and getting on his financial feet again. Weekends he would travel down to the coast and work on his research with Dr. Weston. In the meantime Penny continued to keep in touch with him and even visited him in London on two or three occasions. When he had saved enough money he returned to the coast where Penny had found him the one-bed-roomed ground floor flat where he now lived. He had succeeded in keeping her at a reasonable distance and refused to allow himself to be dragged into another cohabiting arrangement, but Penny was not going to let him go that easily.

'I don't want to live with anyone,' she had told him. 'I have learned to value my own space and freedom. I don't want to live in someone else's pocket, all I need is companionship and a little bit of love from time to time.' She apologised for the pressure that she could now see had been a burden on him, and James allowed himself to accede to her request once again; more for a quiet life than a need to be with someone. His daughter was furious. She had become very protective towards her father since he had lost his home to the mortgage company and gone to university. She had loved Julia too and she had hoped that she and her father would settle down together. She saw the stress that her dad was under from Penny and she resented her for trying to step into Julia's shoes. She *forbade* him to see her.

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James was prompted to take time out from his work and ponder on Penny's emotional needs. Did she really love him or did she have a terrible fear of being alone? Was it love she felt or was it a desperate need to *be* loved. Her cunning had begun to convince him that it was the latter. He put his thoughts to paper:-

“The Paradox of Love

If it hurts then it isn't love.

If it doesn't hurt then it has no value - no pain = no gain.

How are we to unravel this paradox?”

A phrase popped into James' mind and he wrote it down:

"The Tao created the One.

The One created the Two;

The Two created the Three;

The Three created Everything" (Lao Tzu, 604 - 531 BC).

James had discovered the writings of Lao Tzu whilst studying for his pre-university entrance exams. Prompted by the dilemmas he faced that had been initiated by the conflicts between his own needs, those of Penny's and the concerns of his daughter, James' thoughts mingled with the teachings of Lao Tzu and a search for solutions. James wrote down his thoughts:

“Written over two and a half thousand years ago, the Tao Te Ching (The Way and its Power) is full of subtle paradoxes that baffle the mind, yet it never fails to intrigue those with a quest for wisdom and understanding. Hidden beneath these paradoxes lay the subtle truth. To explore the meaning of the Tao and experience the wisdom of its originator Lao Tzu (the Old Master) is to take a spiritual journey towards enlightenment. It takes time to unravel the meanings contained in the Tao, and patience. As we progress, so our perspectives will change, as the consciousness of Man will change on the approach to a new level of understanding.

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Those with experience are able to see the mistakes about to be made by those with less experience, and those with knowledge are able to identify those who lack the same knowledge. Those with experience or knowledge have two choices. They can either stand back and witness the inexperienced and unknowledgeable learn in their own way, or they can pass on their wisdom and knowledge in the hope that the inexperienced may learn by an easier and less painful way. The first method of standing back may be applied if either the experienced are too lazy to educate the inexperienced or if the inexperienced are unable to listen or comprehend the meaning. Sometimes, when the experienced one is aware of the pain of learning a hard lesson, they try their hardest to protect the inexperienced from that pain. But often the inexperienced think they know better and are unable to listen. The inexperienced therefore has chosen the hard way and becomes the experienced. At the same time, the experienced relives the old pain with empathy whilst the inexperienced goes through it.

To love is to protect the loved-one from painful experiences is it not? However, if the experience of pain enables one to grow spiritually in self-awareness then pain has its reward in experience and knowledge. Therefore is it wise, or is it *love* to prevent a loved one from experiencing spiritual growth?

If the witnessing of another's pain brings pain to oneself, one will try to protect the loved one from that pain in order to protect oneself. To protect oneself from another's pain is not love - it is self-protection. To love is therefore to witness another's pain and to re-experience their pain oneself. The joy of love is to share in the knowledge and strength gained as a result of learning hard and valuable life lessons.

For a mother to experience the joy of love for a new borne child she must first experience the pain of the birthing process. For a new-born child to experience the joy of the mother's love it must first experience the pain of its own birthing process and emerge into the world from the comfort and safety of the womb. To prevent the pain of birth for mother and child is to deny them, or at the very least to reduce the joy of mothering love.”

As James committed his thoughts to paper he recalled snippets of information that he had gleaned from his research reading, and incorporated these ideas into his notes:

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“Research suggests that those born by caesarean section are less able to deal with the coming traumas of life, and mothers who give birth under heavy sedation or by caesarean section have greater difficulty in establishing a bond with the new born child.

To not interfere with the natural process of pain, and to witness loved ones’ emotional and spiritual growing pains takes great courage. Love is therefore courage.

When we experience pain and hardship we are likely to pray for God's help, often in desperation. When immediate help is not forthcoming then we are liable to think that our prayer hasn't been heard or there is no one there to listen and respond. As a result our faith is diminished and we are liable to feel even more alone and helpless and the despair deepens. If I were able to fully understand the principle of love as explained above, where it takes courage to allow a loved one to learn through their own experience, then I will be able to appreciate how much those in the Spirit world suffer with us in our own anguish. They know the value of love and they know the value of experience. They have the courage to allow us these privileges and to stand back and wait whilst we learn painful lessons. Our prayers are always answered, but not in the way we expect them to be. The Spirit world wants us to evolve as they have evolved and to be strong and loving. This we can only know through experience. The Spirit world only allows us to bear the burdens that we are able to bear as we progress to higher levels of awareness, and they know that to develop to our true potential we are to be tested time and time again. It is only when we fail that they step in to save us. When we become sick is when they step in to help show the way. Sickness is a sign that it is time for us to listen. The healer is there to help the sick listen, and the sick person who learns to listen must in turn teach others who are sick how to listen.

One of the hardest things a father has to do is to give up his little girl when she marries. Likewise, mothers have to give up their sons when they leave the nest to make their own way in the world. Similarly we may find ourselves helping, caring and nurturing a partner in helping them to discover their own self-identity, until the task is accomplished and they leave. One of the hardest things we have to do in this life is to let go of those we love. To hang onto a loved one’s presence in order to protect oneself from aloneness is a crime against love if to hang on to them prevents their spiritual growth. To offer love to another in order to coerce them into loving oneself is to cheat love. To foster guilt in another by

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threatening to withdraw your love from them is another crime against love. An unloving parent may say to a child, 'I won't love you anymore if you don't do as I say'. This misuse of the word *love* will result in the child growing up with a false conception of what love is. The child will believe that to be loved is to do as one is told without regard for the development of the autonomous self. The greatest crime of all against love is to threaten to kill oneself if a loved one leaves.

Bereavement is painful, but the loss of a loved one must be grieved. To prevent grief is to prevent spiritual growth. If grief is suppressed then sooner or later it will express itself, often in an inappropriate way. To love another is to share their grief and re-experience ones own grief again. The experience and knowledge gained from grief enables one to deal with it more effectively in the future - to accept it and to welcome it for the value it has. Veterans of war know this kind of love. They have witnessed the cruel sacrifice of their comrades' lives in combat. But because they have shared their grief together they have formed bonds of love between them that stretch across generations.

It makes no difference whether the grief of a lost love is through death or not. To lose a loved one for any other reason than through death is also a kind of bereavement. It is the death of a valued emotional relationship, and as such, grief is to be experienced. Some would claim that to lose a loved one through death is easier to bear because eventually one has to accept that they are gone. But to lose a loved one through a parting of the ways is to know that they are still living with the potential to love someone else. To know that they have left oneself for another is probably an even greater grief. The depth of the relationship that has been lost will determine the depth of the grief. If the love we felt for the person who has left is that of a possessive or infantile nature, then the love we felt will probably turn to hatred and bitterness. However, if the love we felt for them is genuine love, then after we have experienced the inevitable grief of loss, and realise that to love someone is to wish for their happiness, then we can share the knowledge that we have helped them gain that happiness. To release someone from our care into the care of another is to love them. To be able to do this is to grow from the need for infantile love to know a more mature spiritual love. It is all part of the painful process of growing up."

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James' own thoughts, reflecting on his love for Julia, the demands of Penny, and the teachings of Lao Tzu finally led him to open the Bible that another great love of his – Renate, had given him. As he reached for the book on his bookshelf he recalled those very first words from the *Book of James* that he had read that day on the mountain in Crete. He was seeking wisdom, and by reaching for Renate's gift to him he was asking God. The book fell open and he read:

"Love is patient and kind; it is not jealous or conceited or proud;
Love is not ill-mannered or selfish or irritable;
Love does not keep a record of wrongs;
Love is not happy with evil: love is happy with the truth;
Love never stops; and its faith, hope and patience never fail.

Love is eternal. There are inspired messages but they are temporary;
There are gifts of speaking in strange tongues but they will cease;
There is knowledge but it will pass.
Our gifts of knowledge and of inspired messages are only partial;
But when what is perfect comes, then what is partial will disappear.

When I was a child, my speech, feelings and thinking were all those of a child;
Now that I am a man, I have no more use for childish ways.
What we see now is like a dim image in a mirror; then we shall see face to face.
What I know now is only partial; then it will be complete.
As complete as God's knowledge of me.
Meanwhile these three things remain: faith, hope and love;
And the greatest of these is love." (1 Corinthians, ch 13, v 4-13).

James reflected on what he had read, and after a few moments he again began to write:

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“We are often told that we get back what we give out. If we show hatred to another then we receive hatred back, if we give love then we get love back. But if we give love in order to get love back then we are being selfish because we are giving something in order to benefit ourselves. Love is given freely without any expectation of a reward. If there is expectation of a reward then it is not love.”

As he finished the passage he was once again inspired to pick up the *Tao Te Ching* and refer to the writings of Lao Tzu:

"All things spring up, and there is not one which declines to show itself; they grow, and there is no claim made for their ownership; they go through their processes and there is no expectation of a reward at the end." (Lao Tzu, 604-531 BC).

Although James had no full understanding of what he was doing at that time (as far as he was concerned he was merely trying to resolve the situation with Penny), he was actually writing a reconciliation between Christian teaching and that of Lao Tzu from ancient Chinese philosophy. Without the knowledge of where these thoughts and scribblings would lead – James continued to write down his thoughts:

“This truth cannot be experienced through being taught or by intellectual thought. To learn the reality, to learn the truth of these words, is to experience the grief of loss, to forgive being abandoned for whatever reason by a loved one (forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us), and to mature into a whole person.

Intellect Brings Pain, but Wisdom Brings Peace.

The Tao created the One. The One created the Two; the Two created the Three; the Three created Everything .

To know peace, first one must know pain. To know peace and pain is to be aware. To be totally aware is to understand everything - the highest ideal.

Just as fear is the inhibitor that prevents us from making dangerous mistakes, it is also the inhibitor that prevents us from making discoveries.

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Just as intellect enables us to learn about the world about us, it is also the inhibitor to experience. To teach by theory alone is to deny one's self and one's students the value of experience.

To put aside one's fear is to accept the experience. Experience is the true way of learning what is of value. To experience pain is to know the value of peace.

Primitive peoples feared the unknown and were superstitious. Wise ancients welcomed the unknown and learned to harness its power.

Modern man has intellect and is fearful of the unknown. He attempts to maintain control, but only succeeds in creating chaos. He attempts to use his intelligence to avoid pain.

To avoid pain is far from wise, for without pain we can never discover peace. Transit chaos and discover tranquillity. Relinquish your fear and seek no intellectual explanation. Free your mind, and allow your pain to bring you peace.

To be a healer one must know pain. To be a healer of physical pain is to be one who has the knowledge and physical experience of being at one with The Christ, and to feel the thrust of a sword into one's side.

To be a healer of emotional pain is to be at one with the bringer of that pain, and to hear oneself say to the bringers of that pain, 'Father forgive them, they know not what they do'.

To be a healer of spiritual pain, one must first have to experience the pain of a wounded spirit; by being abandoned or betrayed by those we love.

To choose to be a healer is the folly of the inexperienced. To volunteer to be an instrument of God's healing love is to be naïve. To respond to the call to be a healer is to have experienced at first hand one's own pain, and then with this knowledge, to agree to experience the pain of others and to feel the anguish of standing back whilst they learn from the pain of growing into a more spiritually aware individual - strong and resourceful and loving. The reward for this work is to be at One with oneself, at One with others, at One with all living things, at One with the Universe, and at One with the Almighty Creator of all that there is. This is Love; the unconditional kind. It isn't love that hurts; it's the lack of it."

James read what he had written. Then he read it again. Were these his own thoughts, or had they been put there? He had learned enough about the influence of spirit

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entities on the thoughts and feeling of human beings, and he concluded that his questions had been answered. There was a lot to absorb in what had been written and he pondered long and hard on it. He gave a copy to Penny to see what her reaction would be. After all; it had been written in answer to his questions that had been prompted by her emotional needs. But any message that was relevant to Penny in what James had written went right over her head and she said, 'You should have this published.' So he did.

A few days after his article had been published in a church magazine he received a phone call from the first of the two new clients that were to influence his progression on this new and mysterious cycle.

Maureen was in her seventh decade, and she had responded to the comment about mother and child bonding and the problems with caesarean birth in James' article. She had been born by caesarean section after her mother had attempted to abort her twice. Maureen suffered from epilepsy. James's investigation of Maureen's traumatic past revealed that she had forgiven her mother for attempting to abort her, but there remained a terrible dread in her unconscious that was not easily identified. As James came close to helping her to reveal this dread, she resisted and withdrew, leaving him with no course of intervention and the mystery remaining. What Maureen did for James however, was to introduce him to an organisation called the 'Medical and Scientific Network.' This introduction was a revelation to James. He had never heard of them, despite the fact that they had been in existence for twenty years in fifty countries around the world. There were over three thousand members, all scientists and healers who were investigating the relationship between science and spirituality. James was astounded at this discovery through Maureen and immediately applied for membership. He was accepted as a full scientific / practitioner member and once again took on the mantle of researcher with the knowledge that with this huge organisation in existence, he would no longer be alone in his quest for answers.

The second of these two new clients couldn't have been more different from Maureen. Katherine was an eighteen year old student at university. The one thing she had in common with Maureen was that she too suffered from Epilepsy, and she too had a hidden dread of something that James was unable to reach. 'There is something terrible that these two clients are unable to face,' he thought. 'What is the connection between

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fear and disease?' He recalled the experience with Deborah Collins who also had a disease of the nervous system.

'Diseases of the nervous system and fear! What is the nature of this relationship?' James asked himself. He began to form a hypothesis. Research into epilepsy revealed that there were lesions in the right temporal lobe of the brain – the very same part of the brain that registered spiritual experiences. There was a link. Something of a spiritual nature caused the undeveloped brain of a foetus to blow a fuse. There was something so terrible and so frightening that the unborn child was unable to process it and this resulted in brain damage. This was the idea that gripped James and prompted him to set his thesis to paper.

James used his skills to help Katherine control her fits in exactly the same way that he had helped Deborah control her attacks, and it worked.

New questions demanded new research reading, and once again James busied himself with his free time in uncovering what had been written on the relationship between the emotions and diseases of the nervous system. He checked back with Deborah and learned that she had succeeded in reducing her attacks from several per day to only two or three a month.

James worked hard to build his case for new research into the relationship between emotions and diseases of the nervous system and mentioned it to Dr. Weston. He was suitably impressed. 'How many patients can you give me?' he asked the Doctor.

'As many as you want,' he replied. With this encouragement James started the process of finding a suitable academic institution and a supervisor to tutor him in the presentation of his thesis. The Institute of Neurological Diseases in London and St. George's Hospital School of Medicine in London expressed their interest. James was on his way once again to achieve his objective of gaining his much sought after PhD. But there were forces at work that remained beyond James' awareness, and his plans would be diverted in a direction that he could never have predicted in a million years - despite his driving ambitions. The new mysterious cycle was beginning to entrench itself.

The telephone call that was to precipitate James' headlong plunge into this new cycle came at about four o'clock on the afternoon of August 31st 2000.

Chapter 6

A New Enigma

'Can I speak to Mr. Parker please?'

'Speaking. How can I help you?'

'You have been recommended by another counsellor. You treated her granddaughter for epilepsy and you come highly recommended. I have agoraphobia. I can't get out the house and I have to take my children to school on Tuesday, but I can't. Can you help me please?'

'I'll do what I can. Let me first take down a few details.' James opened a new file for his client and began to go through the protocols for first contact; name, address, date of birth, etc. The little voice on the end of the line belonged to Marie Green, but it didn't equate with the age. 'She sounds a lot younger than 28,' thought James.

The shy, child-like voice on the telephone had given an address in a village a little off the beaten track, and if she was agoraphobic then he would have to go to her. James consulted his diary and asked when it would be convenient for him to visit.

'As soon as possible,' said the little voice.

James looked at the time scale. Today is Thursday and she has to get the kids to school on Tuesday – only five days. He wondered how well she might respond to suggestion and decided not to leave it to the last minute in case she needed some work getting into trance. He had decided to take the night off from the trucking job. As he worked for an agency and not the trucking company he could do that. He had already decided that with a full clinic the following day it would be better if he got a good night's sleep first. 'I could come this evening if that's OK?'

'Oh, can you really? Oh, thank you very much.'

They agreed a time – 8 o'clock and he asked if they were likely to be interrupted as he considered the fact that she had children.

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'I'll ask their father to come over and take them out.' she said. The little voice on the other end of the phone seemed to change, or was it his imagination? The new larger, more confident voice asked if he wanted directions.

'No, it's OK. I'll find it.'

As the conversation came to an end and James replaced the telephone receiver he was left with a nagging thought. Had the voice changed from a frightened little girl to an intelligent and more confident grown-up? Odd, he thought, and his curiosity had been triggered.

He found the house without any problem and parked his car outside. The house was a fairly large, detached, four bed-roomed house with the front door in the middle. The front garden was neglected and overgrown with high uncut hedges, and as he approached the grubby, black painted door up a litter strewn path he had to brush aside an overgrown rose sucker that blocked his way. The house had an air of decay about it on the outside. 'It's a bad case of agoraphobia if she can't even get into the garden', he thought as he pressed the door bell. A large man in his fifties with thinning hair came to the door, and with a shy smile and a weak handshake he invited James inside. Three girls peered at him from the room on the right of the front door as he entered and was ushered into the room on the left. He entered a large parlour that led to the kitchen at the back, and stood by the kitchen door, in faded jeans and jumper, stood a barefoot young woman. Her long dark hair was pinned up and looked unkempt. She had beautiful grey eyes set in a lovely face with a delicate dimple in her chin. She peered at him from lowered lids as she raised a hand to hide the lower part of her face, and seemed to cower as a timid creature might do. He had seen that look before when he had served as a soldier in the Middle East, in the women who lived in the mountains of Jebel Akhdar in the high mountain region of Oman. The look showed suspicion and fear.

'This is Mr. Parker,' announced the man.

'Hello Marie,' said James. 'I am pleased to meet you. He motioned towards her and held out his hand.

She cowered away from him saying, 'Don't touch me.' James stopped half way across the room and then she asked in a matter of fact tone, 'Would you like a cup of tea?' James answered in the affirmative and she busied herself making a cup of tea as the man

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shepherded the children out the door to leave James and his nervous client alone in the house for an hour.

They sat down at the large wooden table with their tea and James began his initial interview. He learned that the man who had taken the children out was their father, Arthur. He didn't live with them, but was on hand to look after them as and when required. Marie explained that she was afraid to go outside the house because she felt intimidated by her next-door neighbours. They were the neighbours from hell, the boys bullied her three girls and the mother intimidated her. The father was a violent drug addict. James wondered if it was a case of agoraphobia or simply a case of fear of violent neighbours. In any event, this young woman was terrified and he had to help her in some way. She explained that the woman next door had actually come into her home on one occasion and attacked her. She had tried to get relocated but there was a problem with that. The house she lived in was hers, and if she wanted to move she had to sell up and find an alternative. She and Arthur had put it on the market at a very low price but there were no takers. James didn't want to get involved in the domestic difficulties of Marie, but he decided she needed help with her fears and her seeming lack of self confidence. Then she put a major obstacle in his way, 'You're not going to hypnotise me are you?'

'But that's what I do. That's why I am here. If I can't hypnotise you then there is nothing I can do to help you.' said James.

'But I want you to help me.' she said. 'I have had problems for years and this is the first time I have ever had the courage to seek help. It took a lot for me to even speak to you on the phone, and when I knew you were actually on your way here I wanted to stay upstairs until you had gone away again. Arthur made me stay down here, and now that I have spoken to you, you must help me.'

Marie took advantage of the time talking to James about her depression and anxiety, and about how she felt like a prisoner in her own home. James simply sat and allowed her to talk freely, perhaps for the first time, to someone who had an ear for listening. Time passed much too quickly and Arthur returned with the children. James and Marie were still sitting at the table as they came in, all with nervous smiles and deep curiosity. Marie got up from the table and introduced the children, 'This is Teresa the

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eldest, she is eleven. This is Tiffany and she is ten, and the youngest is Toni. She is eight. And this is their father Arthur.’ She turned to James and asked again, ‘Will you help me?’

‘I’ll do what I can.’ said James, and promised to call by the next day when his clinic was over. ‘I’ll see you tomorrow at half past twelve. Will that be all right?’

‘Yes. Thank you,’ she said, and handed him his thirty pounds fee. He offered his hand to her once more and this time she took it. Very carefully and with trepidation, but she took it. James and Marie smiled at each other. James bid them all farewell and left.

He always felt embarrassed when he took money from people he knew were not affluent, and he was always being scolded by Dr. Weston’s wife at the clinic for giving treatment without charging for it. She was the practise manager and insisted that his clients pay at the reception desk on their way out to save James the embarrassment. ‘This is a business,’ she would tell him. You have to earn a living, and we have to pay the bills.’

James drove home wondering how he was to help Marie if she wouldn’t allow him to hypnotise her and decided he needed some professional help.

The next morning he arrived early at the clinic and managed to have a chat with one of the other therapists who used Dr. Weston’s facilities. There was a chiroprapist, a reflexologist, a psychotherapist and another young woman who did some kind of energy rebalancing therapy. The psychotherapist was the one he needed to see, and as he settled down with his mug of coffee in the reception area, she came in. He asked if she had a moment before she saw her first client, and with an affirmative answer she invited him into her consulting room adjacent to his.

‘How can I help you James?’ she asked. James had always felt that she didn’t quite approve of him, or was it the fact that he was a hypnotherapist? There was always an air of competition between different types of practitioner, as each felt that they had some superior knowledge over the lesser trained or, as they saw it – unorthodox methods. James had always seen other practitioners of different methods as complementary and not competitive, and this was an opportunity for him to build a bridge of co-operation with the psychotherapist.

‘I have a client,’ began James, ‘who doesn’t want to be hypnotised. I thought that perhaps she might be a case for you to see.’

‘What’s the nature of the problem she seeks help for?’

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'She says she has agoraphobia, but I don't think it is. She is certainly very nervous and I think there may be some anxiety or depression. She lives next door to the neighbours from hell and there is a bit of conflict and intimidation involved. She seems very unsure of herself, and yet at other times she is more confident. It's a bit of a mystery to me and I think you would be better qualified to look at it.'

'OK,' she said. 'Give the client my number and I'll see what I can do.'

As on previous irritating occasions only the first two of James's clients turned up for their appointment. That left him with an hour to spare before he had to call in on Marie Green. He decided to phone her and ask if it was all right for him to arrive early. She answered the phone with the little girl voice and agreed to see him early. He arrived there at 11.30.

This time she answered the door herself and with a shy smile welcomed him inside. All three children were there and he asked her if it would be possible for him to talk with her alone. She asked her children to go into the front living room and play quietly for an hour, ushered them in there and then put the kettle on.

They sat at the table in the parlour as before with their tea. 'We have a slight problem,' James began. 'You don't want me to hypnotise you, but that is what I do. But I can recommend one of my colleagues who is a psychotherapist and she would be happy to see you if you agree.'

Marie looked disappointed and said, 'No. I want you to help me. I don't want to see anybody else. I don't want to go through that anxiety again of having to meet someone I don't know, and besides I can't get out of the house and I need to take my children to school on Tuesday. I don't have the time to make appointments and I can't go to a clinic.'

She began to get tearful and James could hear panic rising in her voice. She had left him with no alternative but to try something else. A flash of inspiration entered his mind. 'If you don't want me to hypnotise you, what if I taught you how to hypnotise yourself?'

She calmed down and smiled at him. 'All right,' she replied.

At that moment one of the children came in and asked for something. 'That's all I need,' thought James. 'This is going to be impossible.'

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Marie sensed James's annoyance at the interruption and suggested that they go into the front room and the children come into the parlour where they had easy access to the kitchen. Then they didn't have to interrupt if they wanted something. They all changed rooms and Marie sat in an armchair as she offered James a seat on the sofa at right angles to her. She called one of the children to her and told her in a firm but tender way that she was not to be disturbed for any reason. The child went away and closed the door behind her. There seemed to be a good rapport between Marie and all her children. She spoke to them with tenderness and they all seemed strongly attached to her and obliging in a way that most kids aren't. They were certainly very curious, and James thought that this was the real reason for the interruption.

James took his hand-held cassette tape recorder from his bag and put a tape into it as he explained, 'I am going to talk into this and record a trance induction for you to use when you are on your own. All you have to do is put it into the cassette player and sit down as you are now at a time when you feel that you won't be disturbed. Is that OK with you?'

'Yes.' she replied, and James began. He spoke into the microphone in exactly the same way that he used when inducing a trance with anyone sitting opposite him. He watched her as he spoke and timed his induction to match the subtle signs in her behaviour and body language. The trick worked and within moments she was in a good trance. As with all his patients, once he had them in trance he gave them positive affirmations of peace and tranquillity which were always beneficial, especially for someone who had had no peace for some time. He finished the tape recording with the process of re-emergence into conscious awareness and switched it off. He looked at her as she emerged from the trance with a beautiful smile on her face.

'How do you feel?' he asked.

'You are so clever,' she replied. 'How did you do that?'

'I didn't do anything,' said James. 'You did.' He went on to explain, 'I don't hypnotise anyone. I just teach them how to do it themselves. The idea is for people to learn how to control their own thoughts and feelings and to learn how to heal themselves. All I do is help with the process. All you need to do is sit down and listen to the tape and it will help you to relax.'

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'That's amazing,' she said, 'but how does it help with my problem?'

'Well, now that you know what it feels like to go into a trance and you know how good it feels, you know that there is nothing to fear, right?'

'Yes,' she replied. He then asked her to stand up in front of him. She stood about five feet two in her bare feet against his five foot seven. He asked her to look him in the eye and then gave her the cue word to go into trance. She slipped immediately into an altered state and swayed gently as he put his hand on her shoulder to give her gentle support. He counted her back and she opened her eyes. There was genuine pleasure and amazement in them as she gave the sort of shy smile that one might see from a teenager who has been complimented. She seemed so completely vulnerable. She had relinquished her defences and surrendered herself totally to his trust. He had never before witnessed such a dramatic transformation. He had succeeded beyond his own expectations and she was ready for some direct suggestions that would help her overcome her fear of going outside the house. James felt very pleased with himself at his cunning but well meaning deception. He had broken one of clinical hypnotherapy's golden rules – never hypnotise someone who doesn't want to be. However, James thought that his deception didn't really qualify for such a hard and fast rule. After all, he was doing it for her benefit and had only used deception to help her overcome a very real but irrational fear.

James thought that he had accomplished enough with this client for one day and although he still had plenty of time at his disposal he began to consider how best to conclude the session. Just then the smallest of the children, unable to bear the frustration and suspense of wondering what was happening in the next room, interrupted. Marie must have sensed that the session had come to its conclusion and asked. 'When can you come again?' James now felt confident that Marie would respond to his suggestions to enable her to leave the house and take her children to school on Tuesday, so he suggested five o'clock on Sunday afternoon. That gave her time to arrange for the children's father to take them out so they wouldn't be interrupted. She paid her fee and James left, this time with a lot more confidence in his ability to help her than he had experienced the first time.

That night James worked as usual for the agency, but this time for a different client company. Most often he was asked to drive for the overnight parcel carrier in Rochester,

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but sometimes he drove for a general haulier, sometimes for a supplier of drainage equipment and sometimes for one of the large supermarket chains. This night was for the supplier of drainage supplies and he enjoyed the change of driving to the West Country instead of to Birmingham. His thoughts were occupied by how he was to supplement his income and get away from the truck driving. He knew he had a problem with taking money from sick people, plus the fact that there were those who failed to show. He had been specially trained as a teacher of self hypnosis, and the professional institute he belonged to had approved and endorsed a course he had designed earlier that year. He had noticed that there had been several of Doctor Weston's patients referred to him that suffered from work related stress, and they all worked for the same company, one of the big ferry operators out of the Port of Dover. The company was under increasing pressure from competition from the Channel Tunnel and it was showing up in the health of their employees.

It was with this in mind that James saw an opportunity to break into the corporate stress management business with Dr. Weston. Both Weston and his wife, the practise manager, had approved of the idea, and offered him a group of patients to get the ball rolling. He planned to start the course, which comprised of four weekly sessions, each lasting two hours, on the evening of Friday 22nd September. There were a few final touches to be made to the material to be presented to those attending, plus the design and production of a special certificate. This work would fill his time the next day, Saturday. On Sunday he was scheduled to work for the supermarket chain with a late start at midnight. He had plenty of time to see Marie Green and get his work finished on the self-hypnosis course.

After a good, untroubled sleep, James awoke at about twelve midday on the Saturday feeling refreshed and more buoyant than he had felt in a long time. He put his work overalls in the washing machine, breakfasted and bathed, then sat down to work on the final touches to his self-hypnosis course that he had rehearsed in his mind during the previous night's work on the motorway. As he sat at the computer, a figure passed his window and he heard the tap at the front door. 'That's all I need,' he thought as he rose from his chair and opened the door to Penny. She bounced in, giving him a peck on the lips and asked, 'What are you up to today? Are you working tonight? What shall we do? Do

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you want to go to church?’ Penny did that. She asked more questions in one breath than it was possible for a soul to remember, never mind answer. He went back to his computer without answering and closed the file he had been working on.

‘What’s this then?’ she asked.

‘It’s my self-hypnosis course,’ he replied. I have to get it finished in time for the 22nd when it’s due to begin, and I have to see to a new client tomorrow, so I am a bit pushed for time.’ His hints never worked because they flew right over Penny’s head.

She put the kettle on and asked again, ‘Shall we go to church tonight?’

‘OK, if you like,’ said James. Sometimes he just resigned himself to Penny’s requests and went along with her. It was easier than resisting, and part of ‘going with the flow,’ he thought.

Penny made them a cup of tea and he turned away from the machine to give her his undivided attention. She batted her eyelids at him and asked, ‘So what’s new?’

‘I have a new client that came through a recommendation from another counsellor,’ he said. ‘Oh, that’s good. To get a reference from another counsellor I mean. That’s unusual. Who was it?’

He told her about the counsellor and that fact that she had been pleased with his work with her own granddaughter who had epilepsy. The news triggered a memory for Penny. ‘Oh I remember you talking about her.’ James sometimes discussed his clients with Penny. Not in any way that compromised the code of professional ethics or the need for confidentiality, but Penny had a remarkable gift. She was clairvoyant and psychic. This gift of hers was in some ways a blessing and in others a bit of a curse. She had used it to find him when he had been at the university. When she felt lonely she would hone in on him and find him wherever he may be, in the library, the student union, anywhere. At other times she was able to use her gift to help him solve problems for clients. She could somehow tap into what was troubling them and give him suggestions on how to proceed. She sipped her tea, closed her eyes and tuned in.

Penny opened her eyes wide and stared at James with a look of horror on her face. ‘You must stay away from her,’ she said. ‘She is dangerous.’

‘Who?’ asked James in astonishment.

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'Your new client. The young woman. She is dangerous and you must stay away from her,' she repeated.

'What are you talking about?' asked James. 'What do you mean she's dangerous? In what way?'

'I don't know. All I know is that you are to have nothing to do with her.'

'That's not possible,' said James. 'I have an appointment with her tomorrow afternoon.'

'Then you have to cancel it. You mustn't go,' Penny persisted.

James wanted to change the subject. He didn't understand what Penny was on about and he wanted to finish his course material. 'I'll tell you what,' he began. 'You go and do your bits in the town and leave me to finish my course material and I'll take you to church. How's that?'

'OK.' she said, and after taking their cups to the kitchen she gathered her bag under her arm and kissed him goodbye.

'See you at about five o'clock then,' he said as he ushered her to the door.

The church they attended was known as The People's Church and it held its services on a Saturday evening from six thirty until eight thirty. The People's Church was a Christian one that had a strong affinity with the Christian Spiritualist Church. It operated in exactly the same way but without any organised hierarchy. Anyone could conduct a service, read a lesson or direct prayers. The congregation were those who believed in the power of healing as a gift given by God and many were practitioners of spiritual healing, as James was. He and Penny had first met in the Christian Spiritualist Church that meets on a Sunday, on his return from Crete. At that time he had discovered this strange gift and wanted to learn about it. The only place to learn about such things was the Spiritualist Church where these things are studied, practised and understood. James had the gift of healing and Penny had the gift of sight. Sometimes these two gifts could work together, but because Penny had her own agenda as far as James was concerned he often distrusted her motives. He saw that as a great pity, and in his efforts to get Penny to focus more on her gifts than on him he had encouraged her to take a more active role in the Church and leave him alone to get on with his work. This state of affairs saddened him because although he didn't love Penny the way she wanted him to, he still cared for her in the way

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that perhaps a big brother would have. But Penny wanted something that a big brother shouldn't give. She was a grown woman with a woman's needs and she expected James to meet them. The conflict troubled him.

One of the attractions of any Spiritualist church to newcomers was the practise of allowing visiting clairvoyants to demonstrate their skills in spirit communication. Sometimes a visiting medium would be amazing in their skills and accuracy and at other times they were less impressive. Most gifted mediums just happen to be women, but the few men who have this gift usually turned out to be exceptional. On the evening that James and Penny attended, there was a man in the chair.

Following the usual hymns and prayers, the time came for the visiting medium to give his demonstration. He selected people from around the congregation and gave them messages from deceased loved ones and development advice for those others who were gifted. Then he came to James.

He closed his eyes and listened to what he was being told by someone in the hidden realms of the spirit. He opened his eyes and looked straight at James. 'You have much experience,' he began, then paused to listen, and then he continued, 'Here.' His hand went to his heart. He went on, 'You have given much, and we are grateful for the work that you do.' There was a pause. 'But you have never been lucky with your own loves.' James felt Penny glance at him from her position to his left. The medium went on. 'We must change that. We will find someone for you.' Penny shot another glance at James and he felt for her. The medium moved on to another member of the congregation and James thanked him, but it left a bitter taste in his mouth. He had been trying to tell Penny for years that he saw no future for them in the way that she wished, and now the message had come from those on a higher plane than ours that what he had felt all this time was true. He should have felt elated, but all he could feel was Penny's pain.

As always, Penny had this ability to shrug things off, and after the service was over they went to James's local for a couple of pints and a chance to socialise, followed by a spicy Indian take-away in front of the late night horror movie on the television. Penny stayed the night.

Chapter 7

I Have a Fragmented Personality

Because James had been working the night shifts for so long, his body clock was tuned in to his being wide awake during the hours of darkness and sleeping during the morning. His usual time for rising was between 12 and 1 o'clock. Penny rose at about ten and, letting him sleep, she returned to her own flat. After James had arisen and resumed work on his course material, Penny returned with something to give him. It was a large crucifix about five inches long that she had brought back from a trip to Bethlehem some years earlier. It was precious to her and she asked him to take it with him when he met with Marie Green. He thought she was being absurd, but she was deadly serious and urged him to take it. He always carried a small silver Celtic cross with him when working as a healer anyway. Penny had given it to him when they had lived in Canterbury. It was a necklace, but not being one who wears any kind of jewellery, he merely carried it in his pocket. Sometimes he would finger it when he was looking for inspiration. He gave in to Penny's insistence and put the Crucifix in his bag, more to please her than anything else, and prepared to make his way to see his new client, Marie Green at the appointed time of five o'clock. He promised to call in and see Penny on his way to work that night.

Marie opened the door to him with her shy smile and bade him enter. The children's' father had already been to collect them and the house was quiet. She appeared much brighter than on the two previous occasions and a lot less nervous. 'Just the ability to go into trance makes all the difference,' James thought to himself. Even so, he still couldn't quite believe the transformation in her so quickly. Marie put the customary kettle

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on for tea, but James suggested that he wanted to continue with their work first, and perhaps if there was enough time they could have some tea later on.

He settled her down in one of the straight backed chairs in the parlour and she quickly responded to his trance induction. He gave her simple suggestions on how to tap into her hidden reserves of courage and reinforced them. The technique he used was to ask her to inwardly recognise two parts to herself; a weak and fearful one and a strong and resourceful one. When she squeezed her left hand into a fist it would bring the weak and fearful one to the surface, and when she squeezed her right hand into a fist it brought the strong and resourceful one to the surface. When the strong part of herself was in control then she could do whatever needed to be done without fear. James took Marie through a series of exercises where she could feel a marked difference between these two parts of herself, and recognise the strength she really had. He told her that whenever she felt helpless or fearful she should simply tighten her right fist and bring her fearless part to the fore. He brought her out of the trance and put his suggestions to the test. 'Squeeze your left fist for me please,' he asked her. She squeezed her left fist and he asked her how she felt. He could see that frightened look he saw when they first met. 'Now tell me how you feel.'

'This is how I feel all the time,' she said. 'I don't want to feel like this. I want you to make it stop.'

'Now squeeze your right fist,' he told her. She squeezed her right fist and a bright smile lit up her face. 'Now tell me how you feel.'

'I can't believe it. I feel so different.'

'When you feel fearful and you want to leave the house all you have to do is squeeze your right fist, and you can do anything you need to do,' he told her. 'Would you like to try it now?'

'What do you mean, go outside the door?' she asked as a flicker of fear passed over her. 'Yes,' he said as he arose from his seat and made towards the door.

But Marie remained seated and said, 'Not yet, I want to talk to you.'

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James felt that she had absorbed all she needed in order to leave the house, and reluctant to push her too far he said, 'We can have that tea now.'

They sat down at the large wooden table in the parlour with their tea, and James asked her what she wanted to talk to him about.

'I get these feelings that I can't cope with.'

'How would you describe them? Tell me what happens to you.'

'Every aspect of life is starting to go downhill. From the housework to the way I look after myself, to what I do with my time. It's all gradual.'

'What do you feel?'

'I want to be totally alone, because if I'm not strong enough to pull myself out of it for their sake (the children). I don't want them to have to keep going through it, so I try to just throw myself into just me and the kids with nothing else going on around. And taking them to school means I have to go into the outside world.'

'OK, so we are talking about the outcome, the behaviour.'

'Oh, you mean what starts them off?'

'Yes, what emotions do you feel when this starts to happen?'

'All mixed. I'm very mixed up.'

'Tell me what they are. See if you can isolate the emotions.'

'But they are contradictory.'

'They will be.'

'Well I'm angry, sad, happy, everything.' Marie gave a nervous laugh as she tried to isolate how she felt when she became scared and confused.

'Do they fluctuate?' asked James.

'Yeah.'

'What else? We can do this with hypnosis and it's easier. With hypnosis you can hone in and focus on what you're feeling and you can say this is what I feel at these times. But without hypnosis the conscious mind gets in the way as you try and understand.'

Marie ignored his suggestion to examine her emotions under hypnosis and
continued:

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'Well, as I said, it's so confused, that..' She paused searching for the words to explain, and then continued; 'and especially when I know that I'm sort of going up and down, up and down, I'm not even understanding myself any more. When I get to that point when I can't even work it out then I just have to shut down. And I have attempted to find out, and some people have been able to pinpoint it. You've pinpointed a lot, but that still isn't helping, even though I've, mmm, gone through it all I don't understand it. I don't know how I feel; I'm angry and sad at the same time. Angry, happy, sad, and I just don't know any more.' James could see that she wanted to talk things through and prompted her to continue. 'Do you have any idea why that is?'

'I feel fragmented. And I was thinking that today. I talk to the other one if you know what I mean.'

'Yes I do,' said James. He was under the impression that he was talking to someone who had become trapped in her own alienated world and had taken to inwardly talking to her alter-ego. Something we all have.

'In my head, and most of my life its always been the bad one that's got her own way, and now I try to be good, and the only way I can do that is by not putting temptation in my way. Other people are like a temptation to behave badly. I don't know why. And I like the feeling of being good then, but it's so isolated because I have to shut myself away. And then there's always the risk that someone from the outside comes in, or I have to take the kids to school. And that's when I start getting angry, because I feel like saying to everyone and everything, you fucking bastards, I have protected you by shutting myself away, I'm protecting you from me, but you still won't leave me alone. You know, do one thing or the other, either fuck off and leave me alone..... Marie tailed off before completing the sentence, paused, and then continued:

'Because they keep bringing me in. And I just don't know how I'm going to survive it. Well I am surviving it, and (with a pause), I wish I could find just an easier way.'

'What about what we are doing now?'

'It doesn't feel easier. It's just a lot of stress.'

'It will get easier.'

'Well I almost cancelled you tonight because of Arthur. Because I can't stand him the way he is. I told him to fuck off because he mmm.... I swear to God he knows what he

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is doing, mmmm, he's not doing anything that's not human, eerrmm, but even I can see that I put everything aside for my children's sake, and they should be more important than me and Arthur. I need to get better because it's damaging them the way I am, and I have, by getting hold of you, that was me trying to get better, and Arthur's messing it up for me, you know?'

He didn't know, and waited for her to continue.

'And not only that. See you're not at the moment reminding me of him, but you remind me of someone else, (she paused), and maybe the way I'm reacting to you, or Arthur can see it in me, (another pause), I even got really paranoid earlier, and thought that it was him coming back.'

'Was it someone else you knew earlier? What happened there then?'

'I don't know, I suppose he was a male version of me, but he mmm.' There was a long pause as Marie struggled to explain who she was talking about and what he had meant to her. Then she continued, 'I don't know, he was... He seems to have better luck with life. He's got the knack of not getting himself into trouble. I'm sure he hurts deeply inside, but he manages to put up a better front to the world than I do. So therefore he hasn't got that added label of, you know, he's nuts. But I have, so he manages to conceal his. And we played this stupid game for about four years. And in the end because it got to a point where I thought one of us was going to end up killing each other or something serious I ended it.'

'So what's that to do with me?'

'I think you reminded me of him, and, the only way I can cope with mmm (she paused, searching for words), see I still feel that he's going to come back, and I can't let him back into my life. If he comes to the door I'm going to just have to shut that door. I can't even talk to him because I know I'll get roped back in. The last time he came to the house here in May and I turned him away, then he sent me a birthday card in August, but I totally ignored it, but I was obsessed with this man. He clearly was obsessed with me because he allowed it to get like it.'

'So why do I remind you of him?'

'I don't know.'

'You do really. You can tell me.'

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'I don't know. Do you know?'

'You can keep it to yourself. It doesn't matter,' said James to put the matter on hold. He continued by trying to get her to trust him a little more, 'What I might suggest to you is that when you come across someone that you think may be able to help you, and you put your trust in them, that you have a fear that the trust will be betrayed. It sounds to me that you felt betrayed by this man you are talking about, and you don't want me to do the same. That's what makes you fearful perhaps. Am I on the right lines?'

There was a long pause, and Marie replied, 'Yeah.' James noticed that she had dropped eye-contact with him and had lowered her gaze. She was escaping the issue for reasons that it would take James quite some time to uncover, and he wondered what she had meant when she said that Arthur was being difficult. He continued talking to her:

'The difference with me is that what I am doing is a job. And my relationship with you is professional. I want to help you. I don't want to control you. And when the job is done then I'm away. Maybe I'll remain a friend of the family, I don't know, it doesn't really matter. But all that matters to me is that you get better.'

'Well that is how I was thinking, but this is where Arthur can put things into my mind, and I said to him, look don't taint it. I can't bear anything to remind me of him and.....'

Marie trailed off and the thread was lost, so James came in on another tack to try to get to what concerned her about her relationship with the children's father.

'Let me give you a very simple truism. A simple truth statement. Some people attach themselves to another person in order to fill their own emptiness.'

'I can't see the point of that,' said Marie.

'Well some people do.'

'I might attach myself to somebody, but why would I do it to make myself feel bad?'

'I'm not talking about you, I'm talking about other people in general.' He was fishing without wanting to be accusing.

'What him, Mike?'

'See where it fits,' said James. 'If someone needs to attach themselves to another person, to possess another person, to control another person, we have to ask ourselves

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the question, why do they need to do that? What is it that's missing in them that that they have to control another person?'

'Mike treated me very badly, and he knew I was very insecure, and sort of played on that so I began to feel more and more worthless about myself.'

'See whether the same principal applies to Arthur?'

'It's very difficult because I've known Arthur since I was fifteen. He was the knight in shining armour that came along. I was fifteen in a nice children's home then, and I was planning to leave the children's home and travel around. I always wanted children. I met Arthur.'

'How old was Arthur at the time?'

'He was forty There is twenty five years between us. And once I got pregnant with Tiffany I didn't need to have sex with Arthur anymore, so it was as far back as that, but the constant pressure of him wanting sex made me resent him, so I really, really hurt Arthur when I went with Mike. And then Mike was a chance to get away from Arthur and I suppose Mike wasn't strong enough. He tried to say to me, sweep the decks clean, and it's difficult. I rely on Arthur a lot because I know I could never go to Mike's house with my problems. He wouldn't accept them or the children. And never really knew me. But ever since I can remember I'm the very odd and moody person, and the kids know me best – just leave me alone and I'll come round in my own time. And Arthur's seen me at the pits and he uses that against me, and he makes me feel like I can't cope. He fucks off because I tell him to. And then if I do have a problem with the kids, like they need to get to school, or a bill needs paying and I can't do it because I feel so low I can't walk out the door, he uses it against me, and says, but you told me to f... off. And he still does this now. But then on the other hand he is very good because I know within a couple of days he'll come round and he does do all the shopping. He's very good with the kids. So on the one hand he is a saint, but on the other hand, and he even admitted this, because even before you came, or just after you left the first time, he said to me, did he tell you I was bad for you? I said no. It's Arthur's bee. He is frightened of me getting better and never seeing him again. But I wouldn't do that. I wouldn't not want to see him again.'

'So who's the dependent one?'

'Both of us.'

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'Dependent on each other in different ways?'

'Yeah.'

'What he is afraid of, and it's a very understandable fear, is that when you bring yourself together, shall we say.... You've got a fragmented self, you said that yourself. When that all comes together and you feel complete and you can cope with the world and you can do your own thing, his fear is that you won't need him anymore. And that is absolutely right. You won't need him anymore. But this brings us on to the subject of what's important in a relationship. There's a difference between *needing* someone and *loving* someone. So it largely depends on what your definition of love is, and I'll tell you what mine is. When you love someone your ultimate objective is for them to be happy. Nothing else. For them to be happy. And if they are going to be happiest living their own life without you, if you love them you will let them go. That's real love as I see it.'

'He's sort of done that because he comes round and he doesn't get what he wants, but he's still here, so he loves me more than anyone else has loved me but its...., and I keep saying to him, it's still not unconditional, because you still keep bringing the subject of sex up knowing that I don't want to.'

'So you know about unconditional love?'

'Yes, like the children. I suppose I love him like a father figure, I mean I never had a father figure, and....'

'But he doesn't want to be your father.'

'No.'

'Well this is all very understandable.'

'But then he should have known that,....He says I acted older when I was fifteen. I mean look at Teresa, she is almost fifteen. You won't look at her and think that she is ready to settle down and have children. I say to him. Just because I did that... I was play acting., I was playing house. He was my first piece of independence away from social services. I had my little house and my little children, and I didn't go out a lot then, I was trapped on a farm.'

'So you escaped from the system?'

'Yes.'

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'A lot of people do that to escape from their family if they are unhappy with their family.'

James was curious to know more of Marie's history in order to fully understand her fear of, not just going out to take the children to school, but her need to remain isolated from the world and everyone in it. Why were other people a temptation to behave badly? She had been in a children's home and had not had a father figure, but why? She had been in a relationship with a man who reinforced her feelings of inadequacy for four years until she feared serious consequences – why?

James reminded himself of the primary objective – to get her out of the house. Time was marching on and he needed to end the session. Once again he invited Marie to put his suggestions to the test and as he was leaving he invited her to step outside the door. He was a little disappointed when with a shy smile she refused. He promised to telephone her at eight o'clock on the Tuesday morning when she had to do it. He would give her reinforcement over the phone. Marie paid him his fee and he left.

On his way home James began to consider again his experience and training, and he had a nagging feeling that there was something about Marie Green that made him feel a little uneasy. Penny's fears about her being dangerous he could not justify, but he did think that he should try once again to persuade her to see someone else who was more experienced and more qualified than he was. Another thing that troubled him was the fact that she had paid him a total of £90 in cash over the last few days. He assumed that she must be on benefit, and if her therapy was to last for some time, as he thought it might, then there was no way she could afford it. Having treatment from an NHS registered practitioner would be the answer.

He returned home to his flat, ate something and put some finishing touches to his self-hypnosis programme before getting ready for the night shift at the supermarket distribution centre. He called in to see Penny on his way to return her crucifix to her.

'I don't think you need concern yourself about Marie Green,' he said as he handed back the cross. She needs help for sure, and I don't think I am qualified to give it to her, so I am going to insist that she seek help from someone else. OK?'

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'That's all right then,' said Penny. She was about to make herself a night-cap and offered him one, but he declined the offer as he had a forty minute drive to work and he didn't want to be late.

Chapter 8

Philosophical Questions

James didn't want to risk missing his timed telephone call to Marie Green at eight o'clock on Tuesday morning, so rather than go straight to bed and run the risk of oversleeping, when he got home after work at 5.30 a.m., he stayed up. He checked his e-mail, had breakfast and a good long soak in the bath as he pondered her case. There was something about her that he couldn't quite put his finger on. There was something about her that intrigued him and he didn't know what it was. He was a hypnotherapist, he reminded himself, not a psychotherapist, and his treatments were always rapid and short term. The most he expected to see a client for was four times, but he had already seen Marie three times and the outcome was still not sure. He finished his bath and after getting dressed decided to step out for a breath of fresh air. He lived just five minutes from the town centre and just ten minutes from the harbour. James never really had much time to spare for life's simple pleasures because of his commitment to his work, so when he got the chance for a walk along the harbour it was a rare pleasure that invigorated him. He returned to his flat in time to make his call.

The telephone rang just once before Marie picked up the receiver, 'Mr. Parker? Is that you?'

'Yes Marie. How are you doing?' he asked.

'I've been in a trance all morning,' she replied, and I've been walking around with this clenched fist all the time. I still feel a little bit nervous because I suppose I'm afraid it won't work.'

'That's why I really wanted you to test it the last time I saw you,' he told her. 'But not to worry. I can assure you it will work. Are the children all ready to go?'

'Yes,' she said. 'They have all their things and they are waiting for me.'

'Then go now,' said James. 'Right now! Just do it! Put the phone down, go out the door and take your children to school. Call me later this afternoon and let me know how you are. OK?'

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'Yes, OK.' she said.

'Put the phone down now Marie.' There was a click as the receiver went down and James prayed that she would be all right. He undressed for bed with an expectation that the phone might ring with Marie telling him she had failed. But it didn't ring, and very soon he was in a deep sleep.

James slept peacefully until two p.m. He hadn't long been up and the phone rang. It was Marie, just as he had expected. The little girl's voice spoke, 'Mr. Parker, it was all right. I took them to school and I came straight back here. It worked. Thank you. Thank you so much.'

'That's all right Marie. I am just pleased that you are OK. Will you be all right now?'

'No. I want to see you again. There are other things I need to talk to you about. When can you come?'

He was afraid of this, but he half expected it. He had to try to convince her to see a psychotherapist, and that was his clear aim. Now that she could get out of the house he invited her to make an appointment to see him at the clinic but she refused. 'No, I'm not ready for anything like that,' she said. 'Please can you come here. I don't like doctor's surgeries. I can't. Please say you'll come here.'

'Who is your doctor then?' he asked her.

'I don't have one. I can't see a doctor, I don't trust them,' she replied.

Thoughts flashed through his mind. She had no doctor. She didn't trust them? Why? What experiences could she have had that made her not trust doctors? Without a doctor she wouldn't get NHS psychotherapy. He had to talk to Dr. Weston. He would help. He needed time to talk to colleagues and arrange for one to see her when she decided to agree, so he told her he couldn't see her until Friday. That would give him a chance to talk to other colleagues and the psychotherapist at the clinic again and have a word with Dr. Weston whilst he worked at the hospital. She agreed for him to come and see her at one o'clock on Friday.

Dr. Weston was regarded with some suspicion by his colleagues for several reasons. The principal ones being that he not only endorsed complementary therapies but he practised them, and he was the best doctor in the area. He served all the outlying

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villages, and even held local clinics in some of them. He was a single independent practitioner with a patient list of over two thousand families, and everyone wanted to be a patient of his.

'I can't take on any more,' he told James. 'I'm sorry, but I have a waiting list, and besides I'm fed up with having to take on patients whose own doctors are too bloody useless to deal with them.'

Dr. Weston's response was a shock to James. He'd never seen him like this before. He knew he was under pressure, and getting more and more disillusioned with the NHS himself, but he had never seen him spark off like this before. He decided not to push it. As he drove out to Marie Green's he wondered how he was going to get her to see another therapist, and what he could do to get her registered with a doctor. She has three girls for God's sake. How did she manage without them seeing a doctor when they were sick? All of James's questions would be answered in time.

Marie was obviously pleased to see him, and she wasn't the same frightened little girl figure he had met on their first occasion. Marie Green never ceased to amaze him and there was more to come.

They sat in their customary places at the parlour table with their tea and James asked her why she didn't have a doctor. He noticed her discomfort as she assumed the insecure posture he had seen before.

'I don't like them. I don't like psychiatrists, or counsellors or psychologists. I've had my fill of them. They always try to treat me like I'm the problem. I want someone who's on my side, someone who will understand me, someone like you. You listen to me, and nobody has ever done that before. I don't need a doctor because I know how to look after myself. Look at me, I'm not overweight, and apart from my depression and my phobias I am pretty healthy. My kids are OK as well. All right - so they are a bit overweight, but that's because I find it difficult to say no to them. When they want something I usually give in and let them have it. I hate shopping and Arthur usually does it, but when I have to do it I take them with me and they choose what they want. I know I shouldn't and I should take more control but I can't. I can't do anything right. I can't cook and I can't even pay a bill on my own. Arthur does all those things. He even does all the

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housework when I shut down. The kids are used to it and they have learned to look after themselves a lot, but this can't go on. Please help me.'

She had closed down all his options and he began to feel a little trapped. A little lost for solutions James sat back and listened as Marie gave him a full chronological history. She had been born to a fourteen year old who had her adopted at birth by a childless couple who later had their own daughter and a son. At the age of eleven she was put into the care of social services until she was rescued by Arthur at the age of fifteen when he made her pregnant. She had located her birth mother at the age of eighteen and had been rejected by her again. Her birth mother was an alcoholic and she had never been able to trace her natural father. Her adoptive father apparently was a nervous wreck and suffered from depression. At the time she was put into care he had a nervous breakdown. When she was in care, it was in fact a facility for juvenile offenders,. She was bullied by the other inmates, and beaten and sexually abused by the staff.

James had previously dealt with mothers, who, in their forties had come to him suffering from depression and anxiety. Some of them still suffered from the guilt of either having their foetus aborted or their new-born adopted, and he had learned of ways to help them deal with that. He had also helped a very few mature women cope with the long term effects of having been sexually abused by their fathers at a very early age. He had always used hypnosis and his methods had always produced rapid and remarkable results. But Marie Green was different. She had never learned to do anything for herself. She had been socially conditioned by a non-caring environment that comprised of people who had either seen her as the problem or had abused her. She had been alienated from what we would call normal society all her life. She regarded the world and everyone in it as a threat, and it sounded like the only two significant males that she had had relationships with had reinforced her feelings of worthlessness for their own benefit. She had decided that James Parker was her only way out.

James sat in silence as he listened, and his humanity and compassion allowed him to be touched by her hopelessness, and helplessness. The strength of his compassion made him a good healer, but it could also be a weakness, as he was soon to discover.

Marie Green needed more than a psychotherapist. She needed someone who was skilled at dealing with abandonment, sexual and emotional abuse and inappropriate social

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conditioning. She didn't need him – she needed a team of specially trained specialists. But she had picked him. He knew he was out of his depth, and he needed to find solid ground again.

'I have some questions to ask you,' she said as he wondered what to suggest next. She had begun to take the initiative.

'Oh?' he said, as he came out of his reverie. 'What are they?'

Marie got up from the table and opened a nearby cupboard. She retrieved a piece of paper and handed it to him. 'I've written them down for you.'

The note paper she handed him had the headline - Friday September 1st 2000. It comprised a list of very specific questions, and this is what was written:

"I want to learn

Tell me why these things have happened to me.

What is it all for?

Why is our world the way it is?

Are we so primitive?

We hurt each other.

Do any of us succeed.... To be aware of everyone and everything?

Do we have any control?

Where are we going?

Can I go now?

Will I have to come back?

How will I find the way?

Will it always be so hard?

Will I travel alone?

When will I get there?

Will I get there?

Will my children go there? Will it be the same for them?

What is my purpose?

Why am I here? Now?

Am I alone? Are we all alone?

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Show me the right way.”

When he had finished reading her list of questions he put the paper down and looked at her. She smiled at him.

The notes were dated the 1st of September. That was a week ago. She had decided that James was to be the answer to her questions on their very first meeting, even before he had tricked her into hypnosis. But who was tricking who?

James was quite taken aback by her written questions. This woman had an intelligence that had not been apparent before. These were the same questions he had asked when he had returned from Crete. He knew how she felt, and his compassion for her deepened even further. She had struck a chord with him and suddenly they were on a similar wavelength. She smiled at him and said, ‘Well?’

Her questions had taken him to the dimension of spiritual philosophy and he wondered if she would really understand what he was about to say. It was time to tell her a story.

‘These are similar questions to those I asked myself some years ago,’ he began. ‘I needed answers and I’ll tell you how I got them. Are you listening?’ She settled herself in her chair, sat back and nodded for to him to continue.

He told her, as briefly as possible, how he came to be in Crete and what he learned there. ‘It was idyllic,’ he said. ‘I lived in paradise on my own in the mountains by a cool mountain stream and I found the meaning of true tranquillity. People would come to me with their problems and they saw and felt the peacefulness there. Other people came to share this peace and tranquillity and they wanted to make a life there for themselves and their families. There was an English couple with two children, a German man and his English girl friend, and another English couple with a baby girl. The man who owned the taverna in the village had wanted me to run it for him and he gave me a house to live in rent free. But I didn’t want to run the taverna so the couple with the baby took it on. Well, even though he was a trained chef, he turned out to be an alcoholic and he made a complete mess of everything. When he was asked to leave the village his wife left him to return to England and he wandered off into the hills. Later, when he also returned to England he got into my house and stole everything of value. The German man was also an

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alcoholic, and he and his girlfriend stole from my house in the village in Crete. The other English couple took on the taverna but they couldn't cope with it and they ran away without telling anybody. I got the blame for everything. These people had come into my paradise and ruined it for me and I finished up getting the blame. I had to leave, but I didn't want to. I loved the place and the people and I was learning a lot about healing, but it all came to an end.'

James had to pause as the memory of this heartbreak came flooding back to him. Marie sensed his anguish and his sensitivity. This was not the reason he was telling Marie the story. He had a very special message that he wanted to get through to her. He wanted her to know how he got answers to philosophical and spiritual questions, and he knew it wouldn't be enough just to tell her what to do. He had to relate the message with his own experience in order to give it validity.

He continued, 'Well, when I came back to England I found my house had been robbed by one I had tried to help. I had no job, no income, and I had lost the one I loved. I knew that it would only be a matter of time before I lost my house too. So you see – I asked the same questions that you are asking now.'

Marie could see the distress he had experienced and she sympathised. He could see it in her eyes as she prompted him further, "Did you get the answers you were looking for?"

'Yes, in a way,' replied James. 'All I had to call my own was time, and I was suddenly motivated to sit and start writing. Not about my experiences, but about all sorts of things, you know, about how things work, what makes the world and the people in it tick. I didn't really know what I was writing, but within three months I had written an entire book. It was all about cycles and balance. and equilibrium. Yes - equilibrium. I learned that there is a pattern in the chaos, that everything has meaning and purpose, even though we don't understand it at the time. I didn't realise what it was all about until I had stopped writing and then I read it. I couldn't believe I had written this stuff. It was amazing.'

James watched Marie to make sure she was listening, and he observed that she was hanging on his every word with intense concentration. He continued, 'When I started this book in I was experiencing the deepest emptiness I had ever known. I had lost

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everything I had worked for and lost the one I loved, not for the first time but for the *third* time in my life. It occurred to me during this third and most devastating time that a pattern was being repeated here. If I was to prevent these catastrophes happening again then I had to understand the mechanics of the repetitive cycle.

I sat and wrote the initial draft of this book in just three months. During that time I was also learning to develop my skills as a hypnotherapist and one of my clients was a young man who lacked confidence.'

James was about to tell Marie the truth about how the book actually came about, and this was where his message to her really lay:

'As the young man was coming out of his trance he made an observation that he experienced an odd sensation that someone else wanted to speak; someone other than himself. I asked him if he was willing to go back into trance in order that we may investigate this odd sensation and uncover its meaning. He agreed and re-entered his trance state. After a very few moments he opened his eyes and looked at me. His entire countenance had changed from a shy young man to that of an older and wiser person. His physical features hadn't altered, only his expression and the gleam in his eyes. There was wisdom in those eyes. He introduced himself as Xiang Pi, a Chinese scholar from the 14th century AD.'

Marie listened without interruption of any kind and James was pleasantly surprised to have someone actually listen to him without pre-empting him by asking questions that he was about to answer. This was a trait of Penny's in particular that constantly irked him. Encouraged by his intent listener, James continued with his message:

'I was fascinated by this and engaged this person in conversation. His manner was polite and formal but with a hint of friendliness. He thanked me for inviting him and suggested that we continue our conversation another time. After the young man returned from his trance he related his experience to me. He explained that he felt very restful and relaxed, and it seemed as if he were in a long corridor with someone at the other end who was speaking, although he couldn't quite make out what was being said. I conveyed to him the essence of what had taken place and we agreed that the experience was both interesting and stimulating. We agreed to participate in further investigations.

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I had two or three more conversations with Xiang Pi on matters of importance concerning the young man's circumstances and those of others for whom I was providing therapy. All the time he was in deep trance. We discussed things that concern us and I found the conversations most stimulating and rewarding. Then one night Xiang Pi asked if I minded and could he invite someone else to talk to me. I agreed and as he left, the entranced young man's countenance returned to that of a man in deep trance, as was usual. After a few short moments he sat up and opened his eyes. Again his countenance changed and I knew I was facing yet another person. This one was different from Xiang Pi and he looked at me with even greater wisdom coming from his eyes. He smiled a genuine smile and introduced himself as Lao Tzu. The name meant nothing to me but I welcomed him with the same courtesy with which I had welcomed Xiang Pi and we entered into conversation. At the conclusion of that first conversation with Lao Tzu he bid me farewell and referred to me as 'fellow traveller'. Although I had no idea who he was, this address as fellow traveller gave me a sense of being honoured.' Still Marie had not interrupted, and James continued:

'For several days the young man was pleased to accommodate my interest in the Chinese spirit who spoke through him whilst he remained in trance and I had the opportunity to engage Lao Tzu in conversation late into the night. He began to offer advice on the book I was writing and suggested areas that could be expanded upon and that I should summarise each chapter. He knew exactly what I was writing, and sometimes even offered very specific advice on points where I was having difficulty explaining myself. The information was valuable to say the least and I was given terrific insights to the workings of something that still didn't have a name. That was to come later.

Having done all I could do on the book at that time, I started college to qualify to go to university. One day in a class on counselling, the lecturer passed out some handouts that included a quote from Lao Tzu. I was astonished to find the name of the person I had been having conversations with here in print. I asked the lecturer who this Lao Tzu was. She replied that she didn't know. A fellow student said he knew and suggested that I may like to borrow of book of Lao Tzu's that he had in his possession. The next day he gave it to me. It was the *Tao Te Ching*.

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When I got home, the first thing I did was to ring the young man and ask him to come over. When he arrived I asked him, 'Who is Lao Tzu?'

He replied, 'Isn't that the Chinaman you talk to when I'm in trance?' I said, 'Yes, but who is he? Do you know who he is?' He replied that he had no idea. Then I showed him the book.

The comment on the back cover stating that the *Tao Te Ching* was the most widely translated book second only to the *Bible* was the ultimate astonishment. We had no idea that the name of Lao Tzu was synonymous with one of history's wisest and greatest philosophers.

I asked him to go into trance and prepared myself to talk to Lao Tzu, but this time my apprehension was that of a schoolboy preparing to meet a head of state. As the young man's trance came to its deepest, Lao Tzu emerged, and his expression spoke volumes. His eyes shone and the smile occupied every muscle of the young man's face. 'Why didn't you tell me who you were?' I asked, and he replied, 'Is it not always better to discover things for yourself?'

It was only then that I realised what had happened since I started writing *The Silent Witness*. That's what I eventually decided to call the book, but that's another story. The inspiration was Lao Tzu's. He had put the ideas into my head and it was up to me to convey them to paper with the communication skills and language that were available to me. My lack of knowledge of philosophy and my uneducated mind characterised the perfect empty vessel for this task. What was left for me to do was provide the links between Lao Tzu's philosophy and what modern science has discovered. This is the task that Lao Tzu asked me to carry out, in his own words - to 'build a bridge of understanding'.

Then I came to realise why I had to go to university to study a science. Psychology was the perfect subject because it involves both physical and pseudo-scientific study. Full realisation of how the building of the bridge of understanding was to be achieved came when I learned of the structure of DNA - "...the one created the two, the two created the three, and the three created everything" This was true revelation to me.

At this time I was aware of three major problems that had to be overcome. The first was; who is going to believe me? The second was; who is this book intended for, or to put it another way, who are the target readership? The third problem I had to face was re-

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writing the book with all references to the *Tao Te Ching* included, at the same time as studying full time for a degree and keeping my head above financial calamity. All these problems I was aware of, but they were not daunting. In fact I was greatly encouraged and had tremendous energy and enthusiasm for the tasks ahead. The real problems came during my second year at university.

The process of conditioning the mind to work in the required analytical way at university was interfering with my work as a therapist, and I was losing my right brain abilities. I could no longer work and earn enough to pay the rent. The conflict between what I had to learn in order to pass exams and what I knew intuitively became critical. It was to be more than two years before I could learn to switch back to right brain functioning, to work as a healer and to communicate once again with Lao Tzu. Such was the price I had to pay for a scientific education. However, this price was worth paying because it gave me the knowledge, from bitter experience, why scientist only think in one way and why they lose touch with another reality – the reality of the fifth dimension. Or to put it another way – with the spirit world.'

Marie had sat listening to him without saying a word. She gave James the definite impression that she was genuinely interested. James had always had difficulty with talking about his book to other people because even he himself often had trouble in accepting its origin and the reality of his experience. Then she asked him, 'So how does it answer these questions that I am asking?' and she pointed to her list on the table. She had missed the point. James was trying to teach her the value of the trance state and teach her that a spirit-world exists where answers may be found when we ask for them.

He asked her for a page of note paper and drew for her a simple diagram of the yin and yang symbol of Taoism. 'In this symbol,' he began, 'are the simple principals of light and dark, good and bad, negative and positive. See, within the white half of the symbol there is the potential for darkness, the black spot, and likewise in the dark half is the white spot. That's the potential for good. Out of every experience there is the potential for the opposite. Every bad experience can be turned around to be lesson that is good for us. So all we have to do is ask the question, then with time and patience the answer will come and we will understand.'

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He drew another diagram showing how the yin and yang symbol looks when rolled out over a period of time. There was a positive arc that contained the black spot for negative potential, then there came the negative arc that contained the potential of the positive to come. 'It just takes time,' he said. 'But first we must ask the question, just as I did then, and as you have done now. But there is a way that you have to ask the question.'

'What's that then?' asked Marie.

James told her what he had discovered from the Bible on the mountain in Crete. He quoted as accurately as his memory and his own interpretation would allow as he reminded himself that it was about time he memorised it properly – word for word:

"... if any of you lacks wisdom, he should pray to God, who will give it to him; because God gives freely to all who have faith."

'You have to ask the question in a form of prayer,' continued James. 'Often we do this without realising it, when we call out in desperation, "What have I done to deserve this, or please God help me."

'Do you believe in God then James? And what about this Lao Tzu? What is he, some kind of guardian angel or something?' The fact that she addressed him by his first name skipped over James's awareness as he answered her.

'Yes I do believe in God. After all, where does the power come from that enables me to take someone's physical pain away. It's not me that does it. I don't do anything. I just put my hand there and the pain is gone, like some kind of magic. And yes there are guardian angels or guides as we call them. Everyone has one.'

'Do I have one then?' She asked.

'Yes,' he replied. 'We all have one.'

James saw a huge tear drop roll down Marie's right cheek, and he leaned forward to brush it away with his thumb.

'But I'm bad,' she said.

James looked into Marie's sad eyes and asked her, 'What do you mean, you're bad? Who says you are bad?'

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'But I am. Everybody knows it. I have always been bad. I was born bad! I hurt people! I hurt everyone I come into contact with. I can hurt you. I want to stop hurting people. I want to find another way.'

'But how do you hurt people? What could you possibly do to hurt me?' He couldn't possibly imagine how she could hurt him, and she didn't answer the question.

The tears rolled down her face and she stood up from where she had been sitting. Her eyes looked towards the floor, and her arms hung loosely at her sides from hunched shoulders. All James could see was someone who was desperate. He saw no badness in the fragile helpless creature that stood before him. All he could see was helplessness, vulnerability and a need to be cared for. All he could see at that moment was a picture of innocence that would stay fresh in his mind for a long, long time. It moved him.

'You're not bad,' he said. 'You have had experiences that you have been unable to deal with and they have made you angry towards the world and everyone in it.'

'But I feel so guilty,' she told him.

'Good,' he said, and she looked at him in surprise.

Good? Why is it good to feel guilty?'

'Because only the good can feel guilty. The bad just don't give a shit.'

She smiled that shy, coy smile of hers as she wiped her nose on the back of her sleeve and asked him, 'Can I read it. That's why it was written wasn't it – for people to read?'

James couldn't quite believe what he was hearing. Here was someone who he was trying to help in the best way that he knew how, and she was interested in his interpretations of ancient Chinese philosophy. The only people who had been interested in reading it were two very dear and close friends, one who lived in Australia and a friend from college.

'Of course you can,' he replied. 'But it's still not published yet. I'll give you a manuscript. I'll run one off the computer. In the meantime I want you to read this.' He reached into his bag and retrieved his copy of Peck's, *The Road Less Travelled*. It was one of the ways he had decided might be a way of convincing her to see a psychotherapist, after all, that was the objective of Peck's book – to state the case for therapy. She took it and promised to read it. James picked up his bag and prepared to make his way to the

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door. Marie stood and faced him. Tears welled up in her eyes as she looked up at him, then she slipped her arms under his, laid her head on his chest and hugged him. 'Thank you,' she said. James felt the impulse to put his arms around her and hug her back, but he resisted the temptation, stood still for just enough time for Marie to express herself, then he reached into his pocket and brought out his silver Celtic cross. 'I want you to have this,' said James. 'It will remind you that you are never really alone.'

'When will you come again?' asked Marie.

'I'll call you,' said James. He left the house with her teardrops on his jacket. He had fallen into a trap that all therapists and healers have vulnerability for, and that is the exchange of emotions between patient and therapist. In order to answer Marie's questions, James had referred to his own personal experiences and he had shown his own vulnerability. Rather than remaining detached and neutral, he had shown her his compassion. Some say that vulnerability is a form of strength, but his colleagues would condemn him. However, no harm had been done and James thought that it didn't really matter that much anyway because Marie had begun to talk to him, and if she could do that then she could talk to someone else – he would make sure of it. But there was something else: He had given Marie his silver cross and had told her that it would be a reminder that she was never really alone – that God and the Angels were with her. He had meant it, but he also had at the back of his mind the possibility that Penny had been right. If Marie was as dangerous as Penny had warned then she was very, very clever. If she were indeed that dangerous that it justified Penny giving him her crucifix for protection, then giving Marie a silver cross would surely put that suspicion to bed for good.

Meanwhile the forces that determine the evolution of natural cycles moved inexorably onwards – beneath the surface and gathering momentum – unseen and unchallenged.

Chapter 9

Will You Love Me?

Over the course of the weekend James had managed to print off a copy of his manuscript and to consult with two of his hypnotherapy colleagues. Andrew lived close by and often gave James referrals if he was away or too busy to take on a new client, and Jean, who was a bit further away was a gifted, multi-talented practitioner. James had recognised the onset of Marie's transference towards him earlier and felt that it would be better if she saw a female therapist. Jean was also a very effective medium and spiritual healing practitioner, and if what Penny was fearful of had any foundations at all then Jean was the one to uncover it. Unfortunately she was about to depart for America and wouldn't return until the 9th October. Frustrated that he wouldn't have a solution to his dilemma until Jean's return, he called Marie and arranged to see her on Tuesday 12th at 2 p.m.

Marie greeted James at the door with a radiant smile, quickly bade him enter and returned to the telephone where she resumed the conversation that had been interrupted by his arrival at the door. James took a seat at the table and waited for her conversation to finish. As he watched her he couldn't believe that this was the same person he had seen just twelve days ago. Her long brown hair shone radiantly as it bounced around her shoulders, and her eyes had a brightness that gladdened him. He noticed for the first time that she had a beautiful smile. He hadn't seen her smile like this before. Her smiles had always been shy, little girl smiles. Now, for the first time he could see the open smile of a confident young woman. She had put the cross he had given her around her neck. She finished her conversation on the phone and moved towards the kitchen to put the kettle on. As she passed James she told him that that had been her mother on the phone. 'Her adoptive mother,' she emphasised. She had been telling her how wonderful she felt and how James Parker was helping her. She hadn't felt so good in years. In fact Marie had been telling absolutely everyone she knew how good she felt and what a wonderful man James Parker was. She was

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telling Arthur and the children, and she even went as far as visiting two old friends she hadn't seen in a long time, just to tell them how wonderful it was to feel human again – all because of James Parker.

She made them both a cup of tea and invited him into the front room. All their conversations had taken place in the parlour with the exception of the time the children were curious and he needed them to not interrupt whilst he hypnotised Marie. He crossed the room and sat down in the arm chair that Marie had occupied on that previous occasion. She sat on the sofa at right angles to him and looked straight ahead as she thanked him again. There had been something about Marie Green that had nagged at James ever since the first time he saw her standing there like a frightened little creature in the doorway of her kitchen twelve days ago. He looked at her now and he saw a different person, but that nagging feeling was still with him. 'What was it about her

He opened his bag and produced the manuscript she had asked for and her eyes lit up. He laid it on the coffee table in front of them and took out his pen. 'If this ever gets published then this manuscript could be worth some money in the years to come,' he told her. Then he opened the cover and wrote on the dedication page the message:

"To Marie Green. May all your questions be answered."

He signed and dated it and handed it to her. 'A gift,' he said. She took it from him and looked at the message he had written with the look of a child that had just received her most wished for birthday present from her most favourite person in all the world. She was overjoyed. 'Can I ask you

'What?' said James. 'Ask me what?'

She handed him the book still open where he had signed it. 'Please put with love and kisses.'

He took the book and placed it back on the coffee table, then he added beneath his signature:

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“With love xxxxxx,” and handed it back to her. Her satisfaction was complete and a tear of joy ran down her cheek.

‘Thank you,’ she said and got up to fetch herself a tissue. Then she pulled a piece of paper from her pocket and handed it to him as she sat down again. ‘I did what you said,’ she began. ‘I have been asking questions and I have been getting answers.’ The note paper read:

“Who is strong can stand alone

Who is patient can wait

Who loves will be loved

Who saves will be saved

Who can’t walk this path will be carried.”

He looked at what was written in stunned silence for several moments and eventually asked, ‘Where did this come from?’ He was in fact asking himself. Was she actually getting answers the same way he did? Could she really communicate with the other dimension without any further instruction or awareness? If this were true then his job was going to be so much easier. After all—a spiritual healer is only a messenger.

In answer to his spoken question Marie replied, ‘Like you said, I asked my questions and then these words came into my head and I wrote them down. But I want to stand alone and I know I’m not strong enough. I need Arthur to help me but I don’t want him to be there. I want to be strong and by myself, but I can’t. All he wants all the time is sex. That’s what they all want. Sex, sex, sex. I hate them all. They are weak and useless and they control everything with this.’ Her voice rose in anger as she spoke until she was spitting the words like a venom, and as she reached the height of her anger and the words, ‘control everything with this,’ she stood up and motioned as if she were thrusting with a penis. ‘I wish I had one,’ she hissed through clenched teeth. ‘Then I’d stick it into everything and control everything. I hate them all.’

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She was pacing now, back and forth across the room, her shoulders hunched, her eyelids had drooped and her eyes glared from beneath them with smouldering rage.

'Whom do you hate Marie?' asked James. She looked at him and her anger subsided for a moment.

'All men,' she said. 'All men are weak. I have never known my own father. He was a soldier, aged about twenty and married when he seduced my mother. She was only fourteen years old when she had me. He was twenty and she was only thirteen. He was just a weak man who saw an opportunity to abuse somebody weaker than he was.' She spoke with contempt and loathing as the corners of her mouth twisted with bitterness. 'Then there was my adoptive father. HA! What a waste of space he is. Father? Father my arse. A father is supposed to protect his children. I finished up being put into an institution for young offenders because this arsehole was too bloody weak to protect me. Then on top of that I get exposed to a whole world of greedy weak men who just want to fuck helpless little girls. OF COURSE I HATE THEM ALL. ALL OF THEM. THE FUCKING BASTARDS. YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY DID TO ME. YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THEY HAVE DONE TO ME. I have even told Arthur to his face that he is a paedophile. I mean. What is a forty year old man doing fucking a fourteen year old girl? I was his own daughter's friend for Christ's sake. He came to visit his own daughter who was in care because he was a useless father and then he fucks me and I get dragged into all his shit. Now I can't cope with him and he wants me to stay like it. I hate them all.'

The tears were streaming down her face by this time and she reached forward to him. 'I don't hate you though. You're not like them. You're not weak, you're strong.' Marie put her arms around James and hugged him close. 'You are so strong. I can't do it on my own. I know that. Please help me. Show me how to be strong. Please.'

She was right when she said he had no idea what men had done to her. He had absolutely no idea whatsoever. He could not imagine for one moment what kind of torment she had experienced as a child and as a woman. This time he did put his arms around her, as a father might put his arms around a child to protect her and comfort her. He stroked the back of her head with his left hand and told her that he would teach her how to be strong. She had asked him to teach her and now he realised that she had given him no alternative. How could he pass her on to someone else when she had released her feelings to him? She hated all men,

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but she was willing to trust just this one. He lifted her chin and looked at her. Then wiping the tears off her cheek he said, 'If you want to learn how to be strong then I'll show you.'

Marie smiled at him and moved back to her seat. 'Thank you,' she said.

James sat down opposite Marie and looked again at the note paper she had written on.

"Who is strong can stand alone

Who is patient can wait

Who loves will be loved

Who saves will be saved

Who can't walk this path will be carried."

Marie knew perfectly well what was written on the note paper. After all, she had written it herself. As James looked at the words, she said to him, 'Are you patient James?' This time he realised she had used his first name and he looked up at her. Before he had a chance to answer her question she asked him another one, 'Will you love me?' And another, 'Will you save me?'

Thoughts raced through his mind. What did she mean by 'will you love me'? She hated all men and she didn't want sex. That was good news. If she wanted sex then he would be in a very difficult position. She had previously spoken of her need for what she had called 'unconditional love' from Arthur, but he still wanted sex and that repulsed her. James was getting a little confused and he had to have things clear in his own mind what she wanted from him. He set out to make sure it was clear.

'Tell me what you mean Marie,' he began. 'There are different kinds of love. There is the kind of love a father has for his child, then there is the kind of love that a brother has for a sister, or a friend for another friend. There is the kind of love that a healer uses to heal. This is very different from the love that is shared between two people who are attached physically and emotionally to each other. Healing love is unconditional and human love is conditional. You can't mix the two. I can give you unconditional love because it is the healing kind. It is a

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very real energy that exists and can be tapped into. This is where strength and resourcefulness come from. Yes I can give you this.'

'But I want you to *love* me. I want you to make love to me,' said Marie.

James was taken aback. 'I'm sorry Marie. I can't do that,' he told her.

'Why not? Are you married?'

'No.'

'Well then. What's the problem? All the men I have known have been weak. You are the first strong and honest man I have ever met and I want to learn from you. I think about you all the time. I can't get you out of my mind. I have never felt like this about anyone before. Look at me. You can see how I have changed since last week. I can live again. I go out of the house and take the children to school and visit friends I haven't seen in ages. All because of you. Say you will James. Please say you will.'

'It's just not possible. I am a therapist, a professional. My relationship with you has to stay that way or I can't help you. There can be no emotional or physical exchange of this kind between us if I am to be of any use to you. Now that you have told me what you are experiencing I have no alternative. I have to refer you to someone else.'

'NOOOO!!!' she said. 'I won't see anyone else. I don't want to see someone else. I want you.'

He didn't want to offend her or cause any damage to her already fragile self confidence. He knew he was treading on very dangerous ground. Perhaps this is what Penny had meant after all when she had said the Marie was dangerous.

'But Marie. You don't seem to understand. If I have any kind of personal relationship with you it will mean that I am breaking the rules and I will be excommunicated from my profession. That means I will never be able to work as a therapist again.'

'But Dr. Peck says it's all right.'

'Who? What do you mean?'

'You know,' said Marie. 'Dr. Peck who wrote that book you gave me. He says it's alright to love a client if that will make her better. I read it. He said that.'

Marie was right. Dr. M Scot Peck did write that in *The Road Less Travelled*. 'Shit,' thought James. She had him cornered.

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'Marie, I am old enough to be your father,' said James.

'So is Arthur. I prefer older men anyway. The younger ones don't know anything. They just want to get in and out – wham, bam, thank you ma'am. They don't know how to make real love to a woman. But you do James, don't you?'

As the conversation had progressed James had stood up in readiness to leave should the situation start to get out of control. Marie moved towards him and reached up to put her arms around James's neck and then pulled him towards her. He stepped back and put his hands on her shoulders. She was stood in between him and the sofa she had been sitting on and his hands gently leaned her back towards the sofa so her weight carried her down onto it. Marie caught hold of his forearms and she pulled him to her as she sank into the sofa. He pulled himself away from her grasp and stood up straight. 'Stop it,' he said. 'I can't.'

Marie undid the front zipper on her jeans with one hand and slipped the other beneath her blouse. She closed her eyes and whispered, 'Love me James. Make love to me please.' She slipped one of her hands into her jeans and down to her crotch, whilst the other hand teased a nipple under her blouse. James reached forward and grasped both her wrists to pull her hands away from where she was stimulating herself. Her eyes were closed and her lips had become full and reddened with genuine sexual arousal. He tried to pull her hands away but she resisted with a strength that surprised him. She opened her eyes and looked at him. Her eyes were glazed and half open. She was in an altered state and so aroused that James realised she must have started much earlier than he had been aware of. 'Love me please'' she repeated.

James let go of her hands as he realised that there was no way he was going to be able to stop her from what she was doing. All her inhibitions had gone and she was showing the exact opposite of what he had seen at their very first meeting when she had told him not to touch her. 'I have to go,' he told her. He picked up his bag as she continued to stimulate herself. He moved to the door and said, 'I'm sorry.'

James had been physically shaken by the experience, and he was seriously disturbed by the conflict that raged within him. On one hand he was very concerned about Marie's state of

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mind at being rejected by him, and on the other hand he was very concerned about his ability to deal with the situation without compromising his professional status. With regard to being tempted by Marie, James knew that there was no danger. He was experienced enough to know his strengths and his weaknesses as far as the opposite sex were concerned. Temptation had presented itself in the form of vulnerable young women in Crete and he had never betrayed their trust in him and had never taken advantage of them. In fact it had never even crossed his mind. He had often been offered the opportunity for sexual contact with young women who he had met socially, and there had been nothing to prevent him from enjoying their company and sharing a sexual experience with them without any restriction, taboo or inhibition. But James Parker had looked at these women and seen a person about the same age as his own daughter, and that was enough. He was not the sort of man who found younger women appealing. He was 53 years old and that was that. If he was old enough to be their father then he would behave like their father, and he did.

James drove to the harbour to unwind and clear his head. It was a beautiful summer's day and the fresh air was a complete contrast to the dusky interior of Marie Green's front room. He began to examine this contrast. 'Wait a minute,' he thought, and his mind went back to her front room to re-examine the atmosphere. The curtains had been drawn and there was a scent in the air. What was it? Some kind of incense. That was it. She had prepared the room. She had prepared herself and she was preparing him. Her action wasn't spontaneous. She was deliberately trying to seduce him. He could see that now. She was so self assured, so confident, so? What was it about her that? Then it clicked. She reminded him of someone else - someone from a long, long time ago. It all came flooding back to him. Marie Green had the same shaped face, the same shaped legs and thighs as someone he had known in his youth. His first love – Helen. The dimple on the chin and the way her lips swelled when she was aroused.

James actually found himself walking around the harbour in exactly the same place as he had then, what...? When was that exactly? His thoughts traced the memory. He had been twenty and she was seventeen. The year he was posted abroad to the Persian Gulf – 1967 that was it. My God – that was thirty three years ago. James stood on the same steps overlooking the harbour that he had stood on all those years ago and remembered his thoughts as they had been then. He had been betrayed by her and he was experiencing the

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emotions that went with betrayal for the first time in his young adult life. He had been seriously considering the possibility of getting married and settling down after he returned from the imminent overseas posting. The army preferred married men when considering promotion. Married men were more stable. But then Helen had betrayed his trust and he felt the pain of rejection. His platoon commander Lieutenant Edwardes, the surrogate father to all his men, had told James that there wasn't just one woman who was suitable for pairing with, but there was a type. He explained to James that we are compatible with a *type* of person, and when relationships change we always seem to finish up with the same type.

After James had returned from overseas he had met the girl who was to become his wife and took her to meet his family. His mother had remarked, 'She's a lot like the other one isn't she, you know, the one before you went away.'

He had never seen Helen since, although he had received a letter from her after he had been married for about a year. His wife had found the letter and gone absolutely ballistic. She had written to Helen and told her where to go, and James hadn't heard from her since. But here he was remembering and realising that Marie Green was the same type as Helen and his ex-wife. They were all the same type. He still couldn't quite put his finger on the underlying common thread that linked Helen, his ex-wife and Marie Green together, but there was a similarity in their physical appearance that he could not deny. He was attracted to Marie in the same way that he had been attracted to Helen and his ex-wife. They were like magnets to him, and he began to feel the pull of Marie's power. It was almost as if he had escaped the pull of Helen and his ex-wife, and had extricated himself from their magnetism, only to be pulled in again by a similar force.

James still did not know that a new and powerful cycle had begun to gather momentum. There was something else he didn't know. His relationship with Helen that had begun thirty three years ago and had been long-forgotten, was still not finished. James was in for a few surprises. In the meantime he grappled with the problem of how to help Marie Green without allowing himself to be drawn in any further. That was out of the question. But deep down he found it very flattering and stimulating.

James Parker was no saint, not by any stretch of the imagination. He had made some serious errors in the past with women and he had been in a very similar situation that he had

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just experienced with Marie. But the last time had been a social affair. He had had friends round for a New Year's Eve party. At about 3 am, when most had gone, his own lady-friend at the time had retired upstairs to bed. A married couple who were staying the night had settled down to sleep on the put-u-up in the lounge when James went into the kitchen to clean up a little before retiring to bed himself.

When he passed through the lounge from the kitchen on his way to the stairs that led to the upper floor, he had been confronted by a sight that stopped him in his tracks. He had forgotten all about Karen, his twenty-five year old secretary from the office. She was laid back in his wing-backed chesterfield leather arm chair with her legs wide open and her skirt pulled up to reveal black stockings and suspenders. She had one hand pulling her white lace knickers to one side and the other hand stroking her clitoris. Her eyes were closed and she was writhing with pleasure. He stopped in front of her and she opened her eyes. The invitation was in them and she didn't say a word. She just pulled the knickers further to one side. Well, what was James to do? He had no reservations and went in there like a rat up a drain pipe. There had been repercussions. His lady-friend upstairs had caught him red-handed, so to speak; up to the hilt in Karen and had stormed off home in a flood of tears. She later forgave them both and they promised never to do it again.

James had never felt guilty about what had happened. Karen had offered herself to him out of her own needs and James had accepted the invitation. She had used him as she would have used a vibrator and there was no emotional involvement. The fact that his girl friend at the time had forgiven him and Karen for their indiscretion also meant that he had no need to harbour feelings of guilt. In any event, James Parker was not the kind of man who took advantage of vulnerable women. He never seduced them and it wasn't in his nature to be a sexual predator. If anything, it was he who was the 'game' for predatory women.

Memories of Helen and Karen passed through his mind and he felt safe. He recognised his own vulnerability, his strengths and his potential weaknesses, and thus recognising them, he had his defences in place. But he was concerned in case his rejection of Marie's advances had caused any adverse reaction in her. Any idea that he or his reaction to her advances had a detrimental effect was not something that he would be able to tolerate. He had to check that she was alright, and the predominant thought going through his mind was that he had failed her as a therapist. In response to her plea for him to help her he had made her a promise that

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he would. But he had walked out on her. To James Parker that was unacceptable. He had made her a promise, and a promise was sacred. He would keep his promise. His own integrity depended on it.

Chapter 10

Common Threads

Marie's phone answered on the second ring, 'Hello,' said the little girl's voice that James had come to expect from her whenever she spoke on the phone.

'Are you all right Marie?' he asked.

'Yes,' she replied 'I'm fine. How about you? Are you all right?' Her question about his well-being surprised him.

'Yes I'm fine,' he replied.

'Oh, that's all right then,' she said.

James was surprised and actually began to feel a bit silly. He had been concerned about Marie's reaction to his rejection of her advances, and yet here she was being concerned about him. He was mystified and his curiosity, which was first triggered by her seeming ability to switch from a little girl's voice to a more mature and confident one, suddenly became reinforced. His thoughts were interrupted by Marie's voice asking him if he would still help her as he had promised. 'I'll come and help you only if you promise to behave,' he told her.

'All right,' she said. 'I promise. When will you come?'

He knew that she collected her children from school at about three in the afternoon. He thought that if the children were around his integrity would be safe. He had to report for work to a general haulier at 7 pm, and he suggested that he come over at about 5. She agreed.

When James arrived at the house and entered the parlour he was greeted by all three children, and sitting at the table reading his manuscript was Arthur, their father. He raised his eyes from the page and greeted James with a shy smile then resumed his focus on the page without saying anything. The children gathered around James and made him welcome as Marie put the kettle on. 'You will have to stay in here with your father,' Marie

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told them. 'I need to talk to Mr. Parker in the front room, and I don't want to be interrupted. OK?'

She made them both tea and led the way into the front room, where earlier that day she had made herself available to him. Now, with all her family in the next room James felt safe, and Marie had adopted another persona. She seemed confident and in control, the affectionate and efficient mother of three children who seemed to respect her and do as they were told.

'I promised to help you,' began James. 'But I need to know how you need help. I can show you how to tap into your own hidden reserves and I can help you learn how to be more in control of your own life if that's what you want.'

'That's what I want,' she said. 'I need to be in control and not be depressed all the time.'

'Good,' said James. 'Now I want you to listen to what I am saying and be aware of what is happening.' But before he could go any further one of the children came in and interrupted.

'Can my Dad talk to you?' she asked. "

'OK,' said James, 'If he wants to.'

Marie got up from her seat and said, 'I'll get him for you.' She left the room and Arthur came in and sat down.

'I need to talk to you,' he said.

'What's the problem?' asked James.

'No problem. Marie seems to be fine. She isn't afraid to go out of the house anymore; in fact we all had a nice day at the ice-rink the other day. It was nice for us to all be out and about as a family again.'

'Good,' said James. 'I am very pleased to hear it. All I have done is to show Marie how to use self hypnosis to get rid of her fear, but there is more to be done. In any event what has been done up to now seems to be working.'

Arthur didn't seem to be concerned or worried about Marie. He seemed to be more concerned about himself as he began to tell James about a problem he had with his throat. 'I have to see the doctor in a couple of days,' he said in little more than a whisper. 'Marie doesn't know about it and I don't want to worry her, but I think it could be serious.'

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He didn't actually use the word 'cancer', but James got the impression that that was what he meant. Then Arthur changed the subject and started talking about his own personal relationship with someone he had just met. James listened with fascination as this man, who was the father of Marie's three children, and was 25 years older than she was, began talking about an 18 year old girl he had just met. 'It's a kind of destiny,' he was saying. 'I am drawn to them and it just seems so right, you know?'"

James knew what he meant about being drawn to someone, and this made him feel a little uncomfortable. He was being drawn to Marie and had to resist, and here he was in conversation with her legitimate partner and father of her three children. What James could not appreciate however, was how a middle-aged man was compelled to be drawn to women, or rather girls, much younger than convention accepted. The man sitting opposite him was the same age as James, and here he was telling of a compulsion to be attracted to an 18 year old.

'No, I don't know,' said James. 'Why don't you tell me about it?'

Just then Marie came in and sat down on the sofa next to James. She had a strange kind of smile on her face that James was unable to interpret the meaning of.

'What are you two talking about?' she asked, expecting James to provide the answer. What was he to say? 'We were just talking about Arthur's new 18 year old girl friend and his throat cancer?' What he really wanted to know was what was going on between these two and where was he expected to fit in to their scheme of things. He had to give a reply, so he said, 'Oh, you know, how well you seem to be doing and where we go from here.'

Marie seemed pleased that she had been the topic of conversation, then she said, 'that's enough now,' and looking straight at Arthur she continued with a somewhat stern timbre to her voice, 'He's mine. You can go now.'

Arthur stood up and left the room. James rose from his chair and followed him into the parlour where Arthur said his farewells to his children.

'Come and see us again Daddy,' they were saying. After he had said goodbye to James and to Marie, Arthur left and the children crowded around James. They bade him take a seat and one of them picked up the copy of the manuscript that their father had been reading. The little one, Toni, asked him, 'Do you love my mum?' He looked at all the

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children as they hung in expectation on his answer. He looked at Marie and he saw the same enigmatic smile that he had seen when she had come into the front room when Arthur had been there. There was smugness about that smile, like the cat that had got the cream. He turned to the child who had asked him the question, 'Why do you ask?' he said.

'Because you wrote in her book love and kisses – look.' The girl showed him his own handwriting on the dedication page of his manuscript. He looked again at Marie, and she lowered her eyes in a display of coyness.

'What the hell is going on here?' he asked himself. He was feeling trapped. It was as if he had been set up, - that there was a conspiracy between all of them, Marie, the children and even their father. The father had given him a secret about his own health that he didn't want Marie to know about and then in the next breath he had told James about a new girl friend he had met who was only 18 years old. It was as if he was giving James the go-ahead to get involved with Marie - to get her off his hands, and the children were agreeing. That's what it felt like. James felt as if he was being plucked and trussed ready for the sacrifice. It was time to go to work and it was time to get out.

That night he took a trunk up to Peterborough and back, and throughout the journey his mind was occupied with the day's events, and more...

He had learned from his own manuscript, given to him by one of history's most revered spiritual philosophers, to look for the paradox – to look at a situation from as many perspectives as his developing awareness would allow. Everyone has their own perspective on any given situation. All truth could be seen from the point of view of the observer or the experiencer. He looked at the situation from Marie's perspective, from the children's, from Arthur's and from his own, as a therapist and as a man. He had tried to live his life according to the ancient philosophy of the Taoists and this had given him some amazing insights. He applied these techniques as he drove up to Peterborough and back, and he could see much that had previously been hidden.

Marie had been abandoned from birth, her trust in her adoptive parents had been betrayed, and she had been abused by care-workers. Arthur had committed a crime against her when she was legally under age for sex and made her pregnant. Then, it seems to James, that he had tried to keep her dependant on him in order to satisfy his desire for

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young girls. Perhaps this could explain why Marie still behaved in a child-like way sometimes. Mike had apparently abused her until she had reached breaking point and had feared a violent outcome. Marie, he felt, needed to exercise absolute control in her life but didn't have the necessary skills to do it. James felt that she may have never experienced a proper loving relationship and she had expressed two very clear wishes to James, that he help her gain control of her own life, and give her the love she desperately needed. It was apparent that she had discussed this with the children and they had agreed with her that James was the perfect candidate to replace their own father in his relationship with their mother. As for Arthur; it seemed to James that he had recognised an opportunity to escape from the punishment that Marie was inflicting on him for abusing her when she had been younger. It all made sense.

As his automatic pilot guided the truck up the A1(M) and back, James carefully considered his options.

He could abandon his promise and walk away. He could tread a tightrope with Marie by helping her to take control of her own life whilst maintaining his professional integrity, or the unthinkable – he could give her what she so desperately needed – to be loved by someone who would really care about her. This meant not only taking her on, with all the unknown risks and unforeseen problems, but also the welfare of the children. That was a tall order for anyone. He recalled the fact that Marie fitted with a type of person that he was either drawn to or they were drawn to him. His mind wandered back through the memories:-

The last time he had been to Crete for a holiday had been that very year, in June. He had met another therapist from Vienna, a very attractive woman who had been staying in the same accommodation as he. They got chatting about what they did and it transpired that she practised the same kind of hypnosis that he did, so they had a lot to talk about. She was good company, and he had been attracted to her. Their conversations got round to relationships and she announced that she was engaged to be married to a surgeon back home in Vienna. That put an end to any ideas he had about a holiday romance, but the topic led to his own personal relationships. Her psychoanalytic enquiring mind probed him and she was able to bring to his attention something that had lurked just beneath the surface of his own consciousness. All the meaningful relationships he had experienced

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with women were with those who had lost their fathers at an early or premature age. In the beginning there was Helen. She had no father and had travelled from the midlands to the South coast in search of a new life. Then there was the girl he married. Her parents had split up when she had been only two years old. There was Julia who had been born to parents late in their lives and her father had died when she was just a girl. He remembered her behaviour as being girlish and vulnerable at times. Then there was Penny whose mother had died when she was very young and her father had remarried. She too often behaved very young for her age. The woman her father had married following the death of her mother was demanding of his time and Penny had felt abandoned by him. He realised that there was this one common thread that ran right through all these relationships.

Something else triggered in his memory as he drove back from Peterborough that night, and other thoughts raced through his mind. When he had lived in the mountains in Crete a local man, Vasili, a bee-keeper from a neighbouring village, had come to seek his advice. 'Why come to me?' James had asked him.

'Because you are everybody's father,' the man had replied.

What do you mean I am everybody's father?' James asked him.

'Well,' said the man. 'You help everybody and you ask for nothing in return. You helped Sophia when she was thrown out of the village, and you help people with all sorts of things, just like a father does. Everybody calls you *the father in the mountains*.'

James listened to the man with astonishment and he realised what was being said to him. He recalled a time when he had been invited to spend a few days on the Island of Ghavdos with a group of people. There he met others with whom he became friendly; and two of them, a young American woman and a young man from Manchester had an attraction for each other. They had come to him to ask his permission for them to have a liaison with each other. He thought it odd at the time, but now it reinforced the idea that this local man was putting to him. He was a father figure to a lot of people. That's why he got the blame when the alcoholic had ruined the business at the village taverna. He was seen by the locals as the headman of all the foreigners who had come to live there.

On his return from that holiday where he had met the therapist from Vienna, he had experienced an overwhelming compulsion to contact Julia. He realised just how much

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he had missed her and he realised what her need had been. It was a need that all these women had, and he hadn't recognised it. They all needed him to be their surrogate father. He could even see it in his own daughter. She had experienced the loss of him, her own father at the age of eleven when he had separated from her mother. She had found a man twenty five years her senior and he was a truck driver just like he was. His own daughter had found herself a surrogate father to care for her. It suddenly became so plain to see. He had failed Julia because he had been too stupid to see what she really needed from him. He realised that he had failed in all of his previous relationships because he had not seen the real needs of the women he had been drawn to and they to him.

It had been five years since he had seen Julia, but he had written to her on his return from holiday, just to see how she was. He got no reply. He tried to telephone her but the number was discontinued. 'She must have moved house,' he thought; so he went to the supermarket where she had worked carrying a letter that he hoped would be passed on. He went in to the staff entrance where he had often collected her from work and a receptionist had asked him, 'Can I help you?'

'I don't know,' he had begun, 'but I was wondering if Julia Craven still worked here?'

'Oh yes,' came the reply, 'but that isn't her name any more. She got married two years ago and now she goes by her married name. What was it you wanted with her?'

'Oh, I'm just an old friend of the family and I gathered she had moved. Could you give this to her please?' He handed over the letter and left.

James had driven away trying desperately to hold the pain in his chest. Six years had passed but his love for Julia was as strong as it had ever been. A few days later he received Julia's letter. She had thanked him for enquiring after her well-being and had told him that she was happily married and that it would not be a good idea for them to be in touch as her husband wouldn't like it. She had wished him well. It was the final goodbye, and now he had finally lost her – irrevocably. There were good days and bad days after that. Every time he passed by the turning off the motorway to where she had lived, where they had shared time together, he felt the pangs of grief, but he always kept them in check. Gradually it got better, until that day when he realised that his pet project, his need to get

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his PhD that had been inspired by Julia had come to nothing. That was the day his heart had broken.

Now here was another one: A fatherless child who needed his love. The pattern was being repeated again, and this time he had recognised it. 'Was there no breaking this cycle?' he wondered. All the writings in his manuscript were being validated, and he couldn't ignore them any longer. There was a force that he had no control over and it was taking him to Marie. She was the same age that his wife had been when they had parted, and it seemed as if he was being given an opportunity to fulfil the need that he had inherited from his own father – to be a family man proper - to be a father.

The Peterborough trip was a quick turnaround and James arrived home at about three in the morning. He sat at his desk and asked for guidance, and this is what he wrote:

Dealing with Rejection

Thrust from the warm protective comfort of the womb into a frightening cold world must be a terrifying experience. The plaintive cries of the new born infant serve two purposes. One is to clear its lungs and breathe, and the other is to say, 'I am here and I need feeding and protection or I will die. I am totally helpless without you and I need your loving care and attention. Please take away this terrible feeling of being cast out.' The first person to touch the child, skin to skin and to allow it to suckle is usually its natural mother. The bond is formed and both are relieved from the emotional and physical trauma of the birthing process and the cycles of life begin.

If the natural mother responds to the immediate needs of the child with love then the nurturing received becomes the core of survival for the new born infant. Without the love of its parents the child feels that it cannot survive. For this child, the need to be loved is deeply ingrained in its psyche, but there is a deep wound.

No newly born infant that survives has been rejected. The very fact that it survived means that there was someone there to pick it up and feed it. To pick up a new born infant and feed it is an act of love.

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Rejection comes later – when the mother either doesn't care or doesn't have the resources to provide the care. Rejection is inevitable at some time during the life-span of every individual, and the natural process of learning how to deal with rejection usually begins during the adolescent years when dating the opposite sex begins. When the teenage girl is rejected for the very first time, her whole world seems to come to an end. This is because she has never learned what it feels like to be rejected and the experience is new. It is frightening because it undermines the security to her survival that was learned through being loved as a new born infant. To be loved and to survive go together – they are one and the same.

If the infant is rejected at birth its will to survive overcomes the absence of parental love and it adopts coping strategies that are learned by trial and error. In short it adopts a strategy for dealing with rejection very early in its life cycle. If one strategy doesn't work then it will try another until it finds one that does work. The strategy adopted may either be one that is appropriate for later life or it may not. For example, if either screaming at the top of its lungs, or cooing and looking cute brings attention then that's what it will do. If a loving parent is in very close proximity and the initial strategy is to coo and look cute then that is the strategy that will always be adopted. But if the infant is neglected and there is not a parent (or any other person) in close proximity then it will have to scream its lungs out to get attention. All this is essential in getting food and protection for survival. Meanwhile the link between the coping strategy and behaviour is reinforced in preparation for the next cycle of development. All subsequent action and all behaviour are the outward manifestation of a powerful emotion that the infant does not have the knowledge or experience to understand. The actions and behaviour are autonomic and reflexive reactions to this emotion, and this pattern of response between the emotion and physical expression are ingrained in the neurological network of the individual. Such is the power of this emotion. This emotion is fear of abandonment, or rejection. Rejection means death. At any time in later life, if the individual who was loved during infancy has never learned to deal with rejection, when they are rejected the fear they experience is their response to the fear of death. Therefore rejection is unacceptable. The longer this continues into a person's mature years the worse it gets, and so does the fear of death.

Coping with this takes on a variety of forms:

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To reject others first before they reject oneself is one way.

To refuse love from another person is another way.

To cling to someone although that person may be bad is yet another.

The cure is to be rejected by a loved one and by so doing to learn that to be rejected is not to die. The later this cure is administered the harder it is to take.

James did as he had learned to do whenever he received inspired thoughts. He read what he had written, and his education about what was affecting Marie had begun. He felt guided and this gave him the confidence he needed to be able to respond to Marie's request, wherever that may lead him. He finished absorbing what had been written and retired to his bed. It had been a long day and a very busy night.

James emerged from a deep untroubled sleep at earlier than usual on Thursday 21st September. It was decision time. After breakfast and bath he got dressed and sat at his desk. Marie had told him that Dr. Peck said it was OK to love a client if that would do the trick, but if he was to do that then he would be breaking the rules of professional ethics, and that made him feel very uncomfortable. He went to his book case, selected half a dozen volumes and spent the next hour going through them, researching the subject of personal relationships with clients. He learned that what he was facing was a very common problem and it had been well documented. One thing stood out from all the articles he discovered – it's OK to fall in love with somebody, but it's not OK to take advantage of a vulnerable client. James knew that he was not the type to take advantage, and it was because of his integrity that he was reading this research. He needed to be absolutely assured that if he was to respond to Marie's needs he had to be doing what was right. His conscience would not permit any other way. At about twelve-thirty the phone rang. It was Marie.

'Hello Marie. How are you?' he asked.

'I'm OK,' she replied. 'Can you come today? I need to talk to you.'

'And I need to talk to you too,' said James. 'I'll be right over.'

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Forty minutes later James rang Marie's door bell and as she answered it she peered from behind the door with a shy, nervous smile that reminded him of an expectant teenager. This was a new persona he was seeing. He was intrigued, just as he had been intrigued by the change in her voice from being child-like to being more assertive. His curiosities deepened as she bid him to enter.

She led into the parlour leaving him to close the front door behind him and stood in the middle of the room waiting for him to enter. She was wearing a skirt for the first time since their meetings had begun. She looked demure and inviting, but with a shyness that portrayed a new side to her. He moved towards her and pulled two chairs from the table. He offered her one and sat in the other. She sat and faced him.

'I'll keep my promise if you will keep yours,' he said to her.

'What are those?' she asked him.

'I promise to help you if you promise to be good,' he said.

'OK, she replied.

'Good, began James as he stood up from his chair and walked behind her. 'I am going to stand behind you and place my hand behind the back of your neck, and I just want you to tell me what you are experiencing,' he told her. She sat still as he opened a channel to his higher source and closed his eyes. 'Tell me what you feel,' he said after a few moments.

'I feel frightened. What are you doing?' she asked him.

'I'm doing nothing but allowing positive energy to run through your body. Tell me what you feel. Focus inside yourself and tell me what is happening.'

'There is a feeling in my stomach and it frightens me,' she said.

'I want you to understand what you are feeling,' James began. 'You are feeling an energy within you that is the source of your personal power. You have more power than you think you have. When you squeeze your right fist you bring your positive resources to the fore. You know this works because you have used it to get out of the house. Now I

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want you to recognise the power within yourself. Squeeze your right fist now and put it over your stomach, over the source of your power.'

She squeezed her fist and put it over her stomach. Then suddenly she got up out of the chair and said, 'I don't like it. I don't want to do that anymore.' She seemed genuinely afraid. He had witnessed similar reactions to this method in one or two other clients. Often the reaction would be an abreaction with tears and sometimes deep sobbing as negative emotions are released. He had one client jump up out of the seat and run out of the room. Whatever it was that was the source of this energy was very powerful and it sometimes took the recipient by surprise. He had to find another way for Marie to receive this kind of healing.

'It's all right,' he said. 'There's nothing to be afraid of.' He resumed his seat and she, surprisingly, sat on the floor with her back to the door of the closet that nestled under the stairs that led from the front door to the upper floor. For a moment he thought she was going to put her thumb in her mouth, but she didn't. She just sat there looking at the floor with her hands in her lap.

'Why are you sitting on the floor?' he asked her.

'I often do,' she replied as she looked up at him. 'I like it on the floor. Sometimes I sleep on the floor.' She still looked frightened, and James thought of another way to get her to open up to the source of positive energy that he knew would clear away any negative energies from her aura.

'I am going to ask you to open your chakras,' he began. Her response was immediate:

'NOOOO!!!' she exclaimed. 'I don't want that.'

'What do you know of the chakras?' he asked her. She didn't reply but looked again at the floor in front of her. James found himself once again confronted by the same frightened person he had encountered when he had first entered her house two weeks earlier. 'What's going on here?' he asked himself. He moved to sit on the floor in front of her and she cringed further back into the door at her back.

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‘Don’t touch me,’ she said. She was indeed the same frightened person that he had first encountered. He went back to his chair and sat down.

‘I’m not going to touch you,’ he told her, ‘but I am only trying to do what you asked me to do. I’m trying to help you in the best way that I know how. You do trust me don’t you?’

She looked up at him and said, ‘I want you to love me. Please make love to me.’

‘Come here and sit down. I want to talk to you,’ he said. Marie got up off the floor and sat opposite him.

‘I’m not allowed to make love to you as your therapist. You know that, don’t you? If I were to make love to you then I would not be able to work with anyone else ever again. I have over thirty people on my books who come to see me from time to time and I have to increase that to over fifty if I am to succeed in what I plan to do. Do you understand me?’

‘Yes you would,’ she said. ‘You are a good man and a good therapist. You have to keep doing what you are good at, and I can help you. I want you to help me and I want you to carry on helping other people, but I want you to love me, only me.’

‘Oh Marie,’ said James in exasperation. ‘What am I to do with you?’

‘Make love to me now,’ she said as she began to rise from her chair towards him. He stopped her and gently pushed her back into her seat.

‘Wait and listen please,’ he said. She sat down and listened to him. ‘If I were ever to make love to you it would be because I love you. I can only make love to you if I were to do it, not just with my body, but with my heart and my soul – my very Being. If I were to make love to you it would be out of a total commitment to you, and I would have to give up everything else that is important to me. Do you understand what I am saying to you? You are asking me to give myself to you, heart, body and soul.’

Marie got off her chair and knelt before him with her forearms resting on his thighs. ‘Then make love to me,’ she said. She then straightened her body to rise up to him and kissed him gently. ‘Love me please,’ she repeated.

‘OK,’ he said. ‘I will love you, but you must do something for me.’

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'All right, what is it?' she said with a half smile.

'I am running a course in self-hypnosis that starts tomorrow evening, and I want you to attend.' He explained the format and who will be there. 'There will only be half a dozen people, all patients from the clinic and they all want to learn the same thing that you do. Will you come?'

'Yes, but only if you make love to me,' she replied as she once again stood up and put her arms around his neck. He felt her warmth against his own body and he let her embrace him. James felt his inhibitions fall away and he hugged her back. It surprised him when it felt right. It felt good. He was allowing himself to let go and fall in love once again, and it felt all right.

She looked up at him and said, 'Not now. I'm not quite ready yet. Come tomorrow and I'll be ready.' She had reverted once again to the persona of the coy teenager that had greeted him at the door.

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