

Excerpt 1

One psychic experience blurred with the next. Confusion lingered after each journey and taunted her intellect. The constant replay of the journeys in her wakened state distorted her concentration in the physical world. The blankets in her make-do cave became her bed. Nights, days and time now held no significance as she wandered around her home and crawled time after time into her grotto.

Excerpt 2

Zesty spices filled the air. Waiters balancing trays of drinks and food rushed past laughing and chatting patrons. Shane rested his hand on Justine's back and followed the hostess through the dimly lit restaurant. Justine slid into the booth across from Shane.

"May I have your waiter bring you something from the bar?" The hostess slid two menus on the table.

"I'll have a Chivas neat, and I believe the lady will have hers on rocks pressed with a twist." Shane lifted his eyebrows at Justine.

"Make mine a double." Justine squinted at the fine print on the menu, frowned and looked up at the lack of lighting. "I'll have the special."

Whatever that is.

The waiter set the scotch on the table. Shane handed him the menus. "Two specials please."

The waiter nodded and left.

Justine and Shane clinked their raised goblets. Her neck muscles relaxed, and she melted into her seat, finishing the last of her drink.

"Thanks, Shane, for insisting I come out. I needed this."

"I thought so. You seem really preoccupied and rushed lately."

She sat back. The waiter placed another drink in front of them. "Shane, do you ever not hear your patients?"

"Not hear them?" His eyebrows pulled together.

"Today—actually, for the last month, I find I daydream through most of my sessions." Warmth flushed her cheeks "I can't believe I just admitted that." She covered her face with her palms.

Shane snickered. "It can get pretty monotonous at times.

"I think I need a sabbatical."

"Maybe I can help you with your workload. God knows I have some spare time on my hands now that—"

"Shane—"

"Now that Kathryn left me." Shane swigged the last of his drink. "Actually, I'm fine. I really am. We had become nothing more than a habit for each other anyway."

She cleared her throat. "I would really appreciate if you could take some of my patients."

He sat back in his chair and nodded. "Back to business, as usual."

She looked down and rotated the glass between her fingers. He reached out and touched her hand. Heat surged up her arm and around her shoulders.

"Relax, Justine, I know you don't date colleagues." He shrugged. "My loss."

She looked into his emerald eyes.

"I would love to take over the schizoaffective disorder that makes caves in her living room."

She pulled her shoulders back. "I have yet to make that diagnosis of her."

"Come on, Justine, what kind of a nut crawls around on her living room floor and makes a cave under her coffee table?"

She concentrated on mixing her ice cubes with the swivel stick.

"What does she do for a living?"

Justine looked to the left. "She's a medical doctor."

"Whoa, ho." Shane threw his head back and chuckled. "This just keeps getting better."

"My verdict is still out." Her lips stretched tight. "There is something different about her."

"And what advice do you think she would have for a patient of hers that was behaving the way she is?"

Justine shrugged. "I'm not sure she is even going to pursue treatment."

"My god, I hope she does. She needs some serious help."

"I'm not so sure."

"Trances, collaborating with wild animals. Justine?" He dabbed the corners of his mouth and tossed his napkin onto his empty plate, tipped the last of his drink between his lips, and stared at her. "But hey, what do I know? I'm just a janitor."

Justine grinned back at him. "I suppose you're right. Thank you, Shane." She dropped her napkin onto her half-full plate. The waiter reached over and pulled the dishes from the table.

Her mind raced. Do I need serious help? Maybe if I just lessen my load. "If you can take my bipolar and anxiety slash depression" She stared into space. "I could cut my days in half, maybe even finish compiling my research on antidepressant drugs and put out a report."

He lifted his shoulders and let them fall. "Sure, I can do that. I'd rather have the interesting one but I suppose you would too." He grinned. "Will you at least keep me informed on the Cave Doctor?"

"Sure." Justine reached for the bill as did Shane. His hand brushed against hers, sending hot shivers through her body.

"My treat, you can buy next time."

Next time?