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I Can't Believe It's True

A devilishly handsome man rubbed my arm and pressed in with his fingers as if he were probing for something. Extremely curious, I tilted my head to one side as he continued to massage my arm. I noticed some plaques on the wall. Ignoring the pain of his probing, I read “Certified in Massage Therapy” and “Certified in Hypnotherapy.” Trying to see if his name was on them, I focused on the words and I saw R . . . something. My eyes blurred, as I struggled to see the last name. Suddenly I glanced back at my arm. “Ouch,” I said, “you’re really digging in there.” He studied me thoughtfully for a moment. I held his gaze and became dazzled by his grey-blue eyes that shimmered with a spiritual light.

“What sport do you play?” he asked soothingly.

“Why, I’m a fantastic tennis player!” I said, breaking into a broad smile.

“All your muscles are lopsided. Apparently you use these muscles over here a lot.” He moved his fingers down to my thigh and pressed. “This muscle is used for your planting foot, right? The one you hit your stroke with.”

“Ow, that hurts! I thought this was going to be a relaxing massage.”

“This is called getting the knots out so your muscles can relax. I’m working on the muscles you have overextended in order to relieve the pressure on them.” He talked about the procedure as I squirmed around on the table. I wondered what I had gotten myself into on my first visit to a massage therapist.

“There. When they are rubbed clockwise, the muscles will relax. It allows just the right amount of healing energy to flow in. You could say that I have very hot hands.”

“Do you?” I flirted nervously.

“Sure, because when the energy flows through them, my hands get very

warm.”

I wasn't sure what he was talking about. All I knew was that this masseur was definitely a hunk — tall and lean, with those transparent, magnetic eyes. I felt a strange inner excitement as he continued to probe my body.

A tennis friend had recommended him after I began to complain that my neck hurt when I was on the court. She had neglected to tell me to shave my legs a little closer since a great-looking man was going to have his hands all over my body. I followed his movements with my eyes, hoping that my stirred response couldn't be sensed. I watched him as he moved around the table to start working on my feet. I loved having my feet gently rubbed. It felt really good. I adjusted the towel that covered my breasts and looked around to see if I could discover more about him.

I was in a house, in an office of sorts. I could see a fireplace, a chair and a Japanese dressing screen, behind which my clothes lay. I could also see oils and incense on the mantel over the fireplace. I turned my head to watch the sun streaming in through the closed sheer blue curtain while my ears focused on a ballad drifting from a transistor radio. The room didn't contain a clue about this man, except for those plaques. I wasn't sure how to find out more without sounding intrusive.

Finally I said, “So now you know that I play tennis. Tell me what sport you play.”

“Karate.”

“Karate? Little kids play karate.”

“I use it to build strength. I put a lot of energy into my massages and I need the strength. Karate also helps me to utilize the power of the breath.” He paused and looked at me very seriously. “You haven't asked me about my hypnotherapy plaque. I saw you looking at it.”

“Yes, I found that interesting. I've only seen hypnosis done once. Our tennis league hired a stage hypnotist for a party. He hypnotized one of the women on our team — the one nobody could stand. She was an older woman who was always causing trouble. He hypnotized her into thinking she was a pig. She began squealing and rolling around like she was in mud. We just couldn't believe it. The whole team laughed about that for weeks and weeks.”

I watched as his expression changed to a scowl. “Sometimes I agree with that use of hypnosis and sometimes I disagree with it. The problem is that you think the hypnotist has power over you and that's not true. You think the subject does the act unwillingly. That's not true. Everybody is willing. Your consent is given

the moment you agree to be on that stage with the hypnotist. You have given, of your own free will, consent to be a pig, if that is indeed what the skit is all about.” I watched his scowl deepen as he continued to talk. “I just don't like the idea that people sometimes see the hypnotist as a shady, dangerous character. A lot of education is needed to eliminate that old stigma and show the real value of hypnosis.”

“I guess I've never thought about it in quite those terms. What do your patients — do you call them patients?”

“I call them clients.”

“Okay, what do your clients want? What are they asking for when they come in to have a session with you?”

“Well, there are various problems they want to work on. Mostly it's addictions. People are overweight because they don't want anyone close to them. They smoke because of their sexual frustrations. They drink too much because they want to escape and not deal with their emotional lives. Addictions are about not loving self. There is a belief that there is something outside of the self that will help them to feel fulfilled. That is because they are not fulfilled inwardly. So they take something outside of themselves and put it into their mouths, whether it's food, alcohol or cigarettes. Then they become addicted to it. They are fulfilling a need because they don't feel loved. They don't love themselves.”

“How successful are you?”

“I have about an eighty-five percent success rate. You're always going to have those people who say they want to change, but they don't really. Their free will always has the final say. If they truly want to change, they will be successful in changing. What I do is give them a suggestion to change their behavior. I find out what the old belief is. It could be a belief that started in childhood. Sometimes it's as simple as parents saying, 'Finish everything on your plate because there are starving children.' Other times it's because a parent smokes and it's a way to get close to the parent. It's all subconscious. I go directly into the subconscious to find out exactly what is going on and where the belief started. I create a new belief to implant. I then go beyond the conscious mind and back into the subconscious, spiritual mind and plant this new seed that will sprout a new belief.”

I lay there quietly for a while, mulling over what he had just said. I had never before heard addictions explained that way. I caught myself smiling at him.

“You know, I’ve always been extremely curious,” I said. “I’ve asked people what books they read, and they usually mention titles written by pulp authors. I think to myself, That’s it? Isn’t there a book out there somewhere with such profound wisdom in it that it would turn your life upside down? But I’ve never found it and apparently no one else has, either . . . at least, no one I’ve talked to.”

He was working on my leg then and said, matter-of-factly, “You’re going to write your own.”

“What?”

“Your own book.”

“Oh, now that’s a laugh. I’ve spent years on psychology and art. By the way, that’s what I spend most of my time doing — my artwork. Tennis was supposed to force me to meet someone to exercise with, not cause me all this pain.” I flashed him a wry smile.

“So what do you paint?”

“A lot of portraits, houses and dead animals.”

One of his eyebrows rose and he smiled.

I continued, “Yes, some people get so attached to their pets that after the animals die, I’m asked to paint their pictures. When the people come back to pick up their paintings, they cry and cry and cry.”

He burst out laughing. “Animals are such great teachers. Cats teach you to communicate telepathically and dogs teach you how to love unconditionally.”

“Yeah, but I’ve found painting dead dogs and real estate to be frustrating. I have a deep desire to communicate, and I know that whatever I paint says something about me. My psyche, my feelings are in it somehow. Every choice is my decision. That’s why it’s said that an artist bares his or her soul on canvas. Knowing this, I started looking at all art as if I were a psychologist. I even thought about leaving a little card with an analyst’s name and number below other artists’ paintings. Some of these works are crying Help, Anger and Rage in capital letters.”

“You’re very intuitive.”

I let the comment pass and continued, “I found out why some artists are considered masters. Art forces you to your knees with sheer passion. A true landscape artist will teach you reverence for the Earth. A true portrait artist will teach you the sacredness of the human life. They will guide you back into your real nature by teaching you passion for yourself and for the wonderment of all life.”

He looked at me intensely. “Please don’t get me started on the human con-

dition or I'll start ranting and raving."

"Go ahead," I taunted him.

"No, I won't," he said through clenched jaws. "Maybe in the future we can deal with those subjects, but not right now."

I couldn't help but watch him as he moved to work on my thigh. The sunlight hit his blue denim workshirt and the color seemed alive, making his eyes even brighter and bluer than before. He dug his knuckles into my thigh, ruining a perfectly wonderful fantasy. If only I were available.

"Why can't you just leave those muscles alone?" I complained.

"That's why you're here, isn't it?"

I'm not sure what I'm doing here, I thought, but my voice responded, "Tell me why you said I'm intuitive and why you think I'm going to write a book."

He shrugged and spoke slowly. "I just pick up on some things, and since I trust my own inner voice, I blurt them out. Some say that's using my psychic abilities. I also use my psychic abilities when I do past life regressions."

"You're kidding." My voice seemed to echo off the walls with disbelief.

"You might not believe it, but I assure you there are past lives. I have clients who have made remarkable recoveries after regressions. I've seen them get well by facing issues from a different perspective. So even if there aren't past lives, there's a phenomenon of some kind here that makes a difference."

Wow, I thought, as an old memory came to mind. "You know, I had an experience once. One day I was walking through the bedroom and suddenly felt as though I were having a heart attack. A shooting pain went into the side of my heart and stayed there. It was so intense I thought I was having a coronary. My mind knew that I was 5' 2" and 112 pounds, didn't eat meat or dairy products, and didn't have any heart problems. I could breathe deeply, so my mind said, 'It's not my heart.' But my physical body said, 'It's your heart! You're having a heart attack.' Just as I reached for the phone to call for help, the pain went away. On that particular occasion, I realized that the experience had already occurred three or four times before, but not with the same intensity. For some reason, I didn't tell anyone about it. I didn't want to go through all the tests I knew a doctor would put me through. I knew it had to be some kind of phenomenon, but I didn't know what. Besides, something told me that it would be okay and not to worry about it. So I ignored it, until it happened once again.

"Then I told a close friend of mine about the occurrences and she mentioned a psychic who lives in town. My friend suggested that I go to see her. She thought I would find it very interesting, so I went. But I got scared when I