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Dr. Sean Fische is sitting at the desk in his office in Astoria, Oregon. He starts the tape recorder, and begins to tape some notes before his session with his friend and patient, Terry Kline. Terry is one of several patients who are taking part in Sean's five-year study on Past Life Experiences.

“Over the past five years, Terry's dreams have become increasingly lucid and puzzling. All of his thirty some dreams have involved maritime activity around the turn of the century on an East Asian coast--most likely China. Terry believes that he was an Oriental sailor in a past life, which would explain most of the dreams he's had. I, however, really believe that PLE's, during dreaming or under hypnosis, are just jumbles of input from past experiences that make their way to the subconscious mind. On the other hand I am intrigued because Terry, unlike any of my other patients, maintains that he has never so much as seen a picture or picked up a book about this subject.”

“During the past eighteen hypnotic sessions with Terry, all of his PLE recollections have taken place in the same area of the Orient. He can recall the same objects and landmarks. One of which, I found out Tuesday, was of a structure that actually did exist on the shoreline of an island off the coast of China. It was a religious monument, destroyed in W.W.II, that is still referred to in the folklore of the area. But, with no record of any pictures having ever been taken, it is improbable that Terry could have seen it in a book.”

Sean stops the recorder and walks over to his file cabinet to get the rest of Terry's file. He goes to his briefcase and pulls out the information--regarding Terry's recollections--that he has gathered over the past week. There is a book about items lost to WW II, and a Fax from a colleague that contains information regarding a Chinese phrase that Terry used during a session a couple of weeks

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earlier. He adds these items to Terry's file and sits back at his desk, re-starting the recorder.

“Most of Terry's PLE's appear to have even been on the same ship. The puzzling part is that some of the recollections seem to be from the viewpoint of different people, all of whom are Oriental except two--English- speaking, white males. If these are PLE's, how then can Terry be more than one person at the same time in the same place?”

Sean pulls two sets of transcripts out of the file.

“Two of the recollections are particularly amazing. The detail in his recollections are impressingly vivid. These were recalled over the last two sessions,” he says, leaning back in his chair.

“In one session, Terry recalled working on an oriental junk as a crew member below deck. He saw a reflection of himself as a young Chinese man, not yet twenty years old, named Yngua. He recalled being in what was probably the galley. The descriptions of the surroundings seemed so real to him: the rough hewn of the boat; the smells of the meal cooking and mixing with the odors of pitch and tar below deck. He seemed to even *feel* the fear in the young Asian, when the ship struck rocks and water began to gush into the ship's hold. He relived running up on deck and the captain yelling a phrase that Terry recalled to mean abandon ship. Although the words being spoken were Chinese, Terry could understand what was said, and repeated the phrase. He, as the young Oriental, jumped overboard and hit his head on something. Terry even recalled the water filling his lungs and consequently dying.”

Sean moves on to the next transcript, and pulls out a Fax that a colleague of his had sent. He staples the Fax to the first transcription and continues.

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“In the next session, a week later, Terry recalled himself as a Caucasian male, named Taylor, on the deck of another ship in the same area. Looking out toward shore he, as Taylor, saw an oriental junk sinking as the crew was abandoning ship. When I asked Terry if there was anything familiar . . . he replied that he recognized the vessel’s configuration. He also recognized one of the crew--jumping overboard--to be the same young Oriental, Yngua, whose moments of life he relived in the previous session. He watched, *through the eyes of Taylor*, as Yngua jumped in the water, hit a rock and sank, not returning to the surface. As Taylor, he closed his eyes and bowed his head in respect for the demise of the young sailor. Looking into the sea, and seeing rocks, Taylor yelled for his crew to turn the ship about. But, he had yelled too late. His ship struck bottom as well. Everything became a void, and there was no more recollection from that point.”

Sean sets the transcripts aside and continues with the tape.

“This was what I have been looking for in my PLE research. There is no way that Terry could have been both of those men in a past life. Yet, Terry’s recollections are every bit as vivid as other patient’s PLE’s--the type of recollections that have nearly convinced me to believe in Past Lives myself. This is the type of recall that has intrigued me enough to spend most of my practice in the study of PLE. Even with my skepticism, I feel a little disappointed that this may prove me right. Maybe it’s just the way that I asked the questions that brought out this revelation.”

Sean picks the transcripts up and looks them over once more to try to notice anything in his questions that could be considered leading.

“I may be skeptical of past lives, but research must maintain integrity. It is too easy to inadvertently ask leading questions of a person under hypnosis. I cannot find anything in these sessions that appears leading.”

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Sean sets the papers back down.

“If so, how could Terry be understanding this language if he was not actually living as that person? I found out the phrase that the Oriental captain used to tell the crew to *abandon ship*, was actually used at the turn of the century. However, it had not been used much since the late twenties, until a little before W.W.II.”

Sean stops the recorder and begins to fill out the pre-session paperwork for the arrival--in a few minutes--of Terry.

It was the middle of May, a blustery Friday in Astoria. The spring wind kept whitecaps on the waves, giving even this mild day the appearance of a winter storm. Sean’s assistant tells Terry to go ahead and enter the office. He walks across the room and sits down in the large velvet recliner, which nearly absorbs him as he puts it into the half-reclined position and waits for Sean to acknowledge his presence.

Looking up from Terry’s file, Sean inquires. “Having a good day Terry?”

“This weather is really compelling to me.” Terry replies. “Like the weather from the dreams. And you, Sean?”

Sean closes the file and replies. “I feel fine . . . but I prefer indoors on days like this.”

“Did you find out about the phrase that the captain yelled to the crew?”

“Yes, I did . . .when the captain yelled abandon ship.” Sean pauses. “He was yelling a phrase, that had stopped being used before W.W.II. It translates to ‘abandon ship, friends . . . may your next life be better.’ It was dropped, sometime in the 1920’s, for a more optimistic and less religious phrase.”

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Sean could almost see an ‘I told you so’ look in Terry’s eyes, just before Terry’s face went to one of confusion.

“What's wrong?” Sean asks.

“I know what I saw, and it wasn’t a mistake. I *was* Taylor and I saw Yngua die in the water,” proclaims Terry, now trying to dig for some reasonable explanation. “Maybe Yngua’s spirit jumped to Taylor? Or . . .” Terry stops talking not able to think of another explanation.

“I don’t think so. Even if this were actually a past life . . . you probably would have gone from Yngua to Taylor during the session two weeks ago. Or, if you went into Taylor after dying in the sea, you wouldn’t have seen Yngua jumping off of the ship. How could you recognize yourself from somewhere else if you are still trying to save your life in yet another place?”

“I can’t see how this could be anything but a past life. It’s just too real,” Terry said, looking somewhat disappointed and confused.

“Have you had any other dreams about Yngua or Taylor?”

“No, but Saturday and Sunday I had a couple of really disturbing dreams that I was a Mexican killed in California.”

“Another PLE, you think?”

“No . . . Well, yes at first.” Terry pauses. “But this dream had a truck in it. And Alberto, the Mexican, was in that last earthquake before trying to get into the US.”

“Have you ever been to Mexico?”

“No.” Says Terry. “I’ve not been out of Oregon, except for Seattle.”

“Why do *you* think that you would dream about a Mexican getting killed?” asks Sean, as he reaches for his pad and pen to start recording the session.

“It never crossed my mind as to why.” States Terry. “It seemed at first like another PLE. It was so clear . . . so real. Just like all the other PLE’s. I *was*

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Alberto. It was when the truck appeared and I realized when the earthquake took place, and . . .” Terry shakes his head.

“What?” Asks Sean.

“It . . . it was just so real.” Says Terry. “Much more real than even the PLE’s are when I’m hypnotized.”

Sean notices Terry’s eyes quickly moving around as if he is replaying the dream at that very moment.

“Are you visualizing the dream now?”

“Yea, sorta. It was pretty disturbing.” Terry says with a bit of a shake in his voice.

Sean gets up and walks over to a bookcase. “Terry, would you like me to put you under for this one?” He asks, as he picks up a small wooden box from a shelf.

“Okay . . . I guess.”

“You sure?” Sean asks. He hesitates, pulling a thin rod-shaped stone from the box.

“Yea.” Terry pauses. “Yea, there was something about the dream that was familiar. I just can’t think of what it was.”

Sean sets the box back on the shelf after getting out the stone that he uses to hypnotize his patients.

By this stage in Terry’s therapy, just Sean’s reaching for the box, is enough to send him partially under hypnosis. Terry reaches down to the side of the chair and adjusts the recliner to the fully reclined position and takes a deep breath. He exhales with a bit of a sigh. “Okay Doc.”

Sean sits down next to Terry and holds the stone in front of Terry’s face.

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Terry stares at the multi-colored claylike stone without blinking. His eyes follow the stone as Sean moves it. Terry starts the routine to begin his hypnosis. Visualizing himself walking out of a forest--representing the crowded mind of everyday life--and through a meadow to the shore of a pond. Terry, a fairly large person, fills up the whole length of the chair and most of what the velvet cushioning will give. Soon Terry's hands relax from clutching the arm of the chair, which seems to spread out a bit, as if Terry has been keeping it from falling apart with his grip.

Sean turns on the tape recorder.

"When was the first dream Terry?"

"Saturday." He answers, in a whisper.

Now Terry is sitting on a log at the edge of the pond. He bends down closer to the water and stares into the reflection of himself.

"And you're falling asleep Saturday night." Sean starts Terry off into a deep sleep.

"Yes." Terry says. His voice now so very soft.

"You are totally relaxed," commands Sean. "Where are you Terry?"

"At the pond."

"Okay, now move into your mind . . . to Saturday night's dream."

"Mmm," mumbles Terry.

"Can you get there?"

"Uh huh." At the pond, Terry is looking at his reflection as it turns into that of the Mexican man from his previous dreams. The sky grows darker as the wind picks up, and the pond becomes the whole dream. Terry is now Alberto.

"Who are you---where are you now?"

"Home . . .I'm Alberto."

"Where?"

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“Mexico. With my family.” Terry pauses, then adds. “The pictures are falling off the wall. Everything’s moving---shaking.”

Terry sees the broken down home in a Mexican slum. Built mostly of plywood and dried mud, it’s breaking apart and falling down. The family is in the back of the shack. He can hear them, but not see them.

“Pictures of what?” Sean asks, trying to establish some reference to time and place.

“The kids . . . my wife . . . Mom and Dad.”

“Why are they falling?”

“An earthquake! The kids are screaming.” Terry sees himself as Alberto running to the back of the shack. He grabs the kids and his wife and runs out of their home and into the street. Everyone in the slum is running out as well.

“Are you still in the house?” Sean asks. “Are you hurt?”

“No---Outside---Everyone is.” Terry’s face looks strained, as if trying to focus on something. “It’s day now. The house looks terrible!” Terry can see all of the shacks completely destroyed from the quake and small fires scattered about the town. It looks as though no one was seriously injured. The sky has a blanket of dust and smoke. “The sun looks like a hot piece of coal roasting away what is left of the lives of the people all around me.”

“Do you know what year it is?”

“1981, I think. I don’t know why though. . . What a way to start off the new decade.”

“Anything else Alberto?”

“My wife is carrying luggage and I ask her if that’s everything. She says no, but it’s all we can take.” A vehicle is driving toward them and Alberto recognizes it as Michael’s truck. “There’s the truck. Michael is pointing at the truck bed. He’s saying something.”

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“Can you make out what he’s saying?”

“He’s saying your family has to ride in here.” Terry sees that the truck appears to be a 1978 or ‘79 model--very rusted and banged up---it doesn’t look safe to travel in the back.

“There’s a false bed in the truck.” Terry says. “It doesn’t look big enough . . . even for the two kids. It’s too long of a drive to go all the way in there. Michael says that I’m the only one with a card. We’d never get everyone across.” Terry clenches the arms of the chair and shakes back and forth a couple of times. The chair makes a loud creak as if to almost collapse to the floor.

“Terry!” Sean says. “Alberto!”

“NO!” Terry starts to sob. Breathing in short quick breaths he continues. “Michael you fool . . . didn’t you check it?”

“What happened, Alberto?”

“They’re dead . . . My family is dead.” Terry sees Alberto’s wife and two kids, motionless in the false bed of the truck. They are parked on the side of the road near a farm. The truck is setting at an angle, partially in a three-foot ditch. Michael grabs a shovel from the bed of the truck and starts to pull out one of the kids.

“It was carbon monoxide!” says Terry. “No, you can’t bury them here! We’ve got to go back!” Then he’s quiet for about 15 seconds. He sees that Michael has let go of the child and goes to the cab of the truck. Reaching behind the seat, he pulls out a gun.

“Alberto!” says Sean. “Is there anything else?”

“Michael has a gun.” Terry says, quietly. “Go ahead--I don’t have anything left--shoot me!”

“Alberto?” Sean asks. But Terry is silent. “Terry?”

“Yeah” Terry answers.

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“Anything else?”

“No.” Terry sighs. “He shot me.”

“*YOU ARE BACK HERE.*” Sean says the key words to bring Terry out of the hypnotic state. He waits a couple of minutes and says, “How do you feel?”

“Sad,” Terry wipes a tear from his cheek, “but I saw it.”

“What?”

“*Sander’s Tomato Farm.* That’s where the truck was stopped.”

“So?”

“I’d never eaten that brand--until Friday-- when I made some soup. That’s what was familiar about the dream.” Terry felt relieved that at least he didn’t have that nagging feeling about the dream anymore. “I guess that’s something I shouldn’t be eating before I go to bed,” he says, half-jokingly.

Sean gets up and walks back over to the bookshelf. He opens the wooden box and starts to put the stone back. As he just about has the stone put back, he turns to Terry and asks, “Can you think of any particular food you may have eaten before the dreams about Yngua or Taylor?”

“No.” Terry’s expression turns to a smirk. “That would have to had been some pretty old food, huh.”

“What do you think of this dream?” Sean asks.

“Ya know . . . it’s kinda scary, but I’d like to know if there’s really a place like this in California. It was so real. What if it was a premonition?” Terry’s eyes widen at the thought that this could be the explanation. He reaches down and brings the recliner back to the sitting position.

“I don’t think so,” says Sean “The Earthquake. You--Alberto--said it was 1981.”

“That’s right,” Terry concedes, disappointedly. “Maybe a Ghost?”

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“We’ve been over that before.” Sean says, a bit irked by the remark. “Even if one is to believe in ghosts . . . Why you? Why not someone who knew Alberto or Michael? And why up here and not down there?” Sean is even more skeptical--even cynical--about ghosts, as he is about past lives.

“Maybe Alberto’s ghost wanted to come up here. It could have been their destination.”

“That’s really stretching it, Terry,” says Sean, quelling Terry’s direction of thought.

“I know. I guess all we have are tomatoes,” jokes Terry.

Sean sits back at his desk and opens Terry’s file. He puts in the notes and stops midway through, closing the folder. He looks toward Terry, but with a blank stare at nothing in particular.

“What about Beverly?”

Sean asks about Terry’s wife. He notices a perplexed look on Terry’s face, so he adds, “The tomato soup?”

“Well, yes, she had some.”

“And, her dreams?”

“I don’t know.” Terry chuckles. “She hasn’t mentioned anything. I mean . . . nightmares or tomatoes.”

“Could you ask her?” Sean writes something on a piece of paper. “Maybe she just didn’t think it was worth mentioning.”

“You really want me to ask her?” Terry says, astonished that Sean might even consider a connection.

“Maybe it’s just a chemical thing with you. I could recommend a good psychiatrist to help you.”

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“I suppose it won’t hurt to ask.” Terry says, as he gets out of the chair and reaches across the desk to shake Sean’s hand before leaving.

Sean stands as well and hands the piece of paper to Terry, who, thinking it’s the name of a psychiatrist, puts it in his shirt pocket and continues with the handshake.

“Be sure to set up another session for next week,” says Sean.

“Thank you, Sean. I will.” Terry turns and heads for the door.

“Don’t forget to ask Bev.”

“I won’t. We still have some frozen soup left for tonight. Maybe I’ll have another dream as well,” Terry comments, as he leaves the office .