

Kingsley imagined himself driving the beautiful new car. He imagined one hand on the steering wheel and the other wrapped around Amanda. Maybe she'd lean her head on his shoulder. He grinned from ear-to-ear and lowered the window so he could feel the warm summer wind in his face. Joyce zoomed east on the interstate, all the way to Virginia Beach, to the smell of the Atlantic Ocean and the sound of the waves. They passed a row of high-rise hotels and a sagging amusement park stuffed with oversized people riding the Ferris wheel and roller-coaster. They rounded a corner and drove by a long white building with blue awnings. Joyce slowed the car. She seemed mesmerized. The building looked like it had been plucked off a postcard from another place, another era, as if it belonged on the Atlantic City boardwalk during the bootlegging twenties.

Kingsley was surprised when his mother made a U-turn at the next stoplight, returned to the white building, and pulled into the parking lot. "What are we doing here, Mom?" he asked. He read the sign in front of the building, *Edgar Cayce Foundation for Enlightenment and Research*.

Joyce stopped the car and stared at the building. "I feel like something's tugging at me, hon, telling me I should be here."

"What do you mean *something's tugging at you*?"

"I don't know, Kingsley. Something's telling me to go inside."

They got out of the car and Kingsley followed Joyce across a tile labyrinth with the yin-yang image of two dolphins in the center, and then walked up a flight of white, wooden steps. His mother had done a lot of questionable things in her life but he'd never known her to act so spooky. Inside, the building was fresh and cool, like a pine forest after an afternoon rain. Soothing music played over unseen loudspeakers. No one was at the reception desk. Joyce picked up a brochure and read it aloud:

*The Sleeping Prophet*

*Edgar Cayce emphasized the spiritual nature of humankind, what he believed to be the truest part of ourselves. Although we possess physical bodies and mental attitudes, ultimately our deepest connection is to our spiritual nature. Spirit is the Life, Mind is the Builder, and the Physical is the Result. The impact of our choices will find expression in the physical, affecting ourselves, our relationships, and our world.*

Joyce handed the pamphlet to Kingsley, who reread it, trying to understand. He'd never heard of this man and didn't know why he and Joyce were there. "Who's Edgar Cayce, Mom?"

"I don't know, hon," she said, looking around, searching for clues. "I don't know why I'm here or what I'm looking for. All I know is that it has something to do with you. I feel like these people are gonna tell me how to help you."

"Is Edgar Cayce going to cure my headaches?"

Joyce pointed to a large painting of a balding man wearing wire-rimmed glasses. Under the painting was an engraved plaque. "See there," she said, "That says he died in 1945."

Kingsley's confusion grew. "Then why are we here?"

A tall, slender woman suddenly appeared. Kingsley assumed she'd come from around the corner but he wasn't sure. She seemed to just materialize, like she was an angel or maybe a witch from *Harry Potter*. She had auburn hair and wore an ivory shirt with a simple, tan skirt. She headed straight toward Joyce, didn't waver or pause. She grabbed Joyce's arm and placed her other hand on Joyce's forehead. "Your daughter is the zenith that will change the world."

Joyce tried to pull away. "I don't have a daughter."

The woman held tight. Her high-pitched voice sounded like an alarm. "The Collapse is upon us. The years ahead are full of sorrow. Many will not survive the heartache, but you will." The woman released Joyce's arm, leaving indentations in her ruddy skin. "But you will," she repeated, and then disappeared around a corner.

Kingsley started to follow, but Joyce held him back. She shivered and rubbed her arm. "Let's get out of here."