

As Naomi paused, Doctor Partridge sat up straighter and said, “Wow, Naomi. You make my job easier with your openness. I was trained to try and pry those insights out of a patient, and here you spill them out for me like... like you are an intern or a colleague reporting on a case.”

Naomi thought for a moment and then said, “Actually, Doc, I have to disagree. I am not giving you any insights at all. All I have are questions. I’m just repeating for you everything I went over three or four times last night. Lots of questions and problems; no insights.”

Partridge laughed, “I think it is a matter of terminology. In my line of work, often just knowing enough to ask the right questions is an insight as to what the problem is. In this odd problem you have presented us with, you have a unique case and you seem to have done a good job focusing on what you need to know to move forward. That makes my job as a psychiatrist easier.”

Naomi frowned, “So, you are looking at this as a psychiatric problem still?”

Partridge shook his head, “No, no, not at all. It is just that I am a psychiatrist who has a patient who has an absolutely unique and mysterious event she is dealing with and I need to make sure the profound changes she is faced with don’t cause any more problems for her. I feel totally incompetent to answer the question of what happened to her, but I can try to help her cope with it. That is a psychiatrist’s stock in trade.”

“Sounds fair,” Naomi said. “And on that question, I went around and around on that last night, too, and all day today. And, I’m guessing I will be working on the question of what happened to me for a long time to come. She continued, “There is no explanation for what happened to me. At least in my experience and knowledge. I had a comparative religion class in college. BYU let me, as a non-Mormon, take it to fulfill my religion requirement. I know that several religions include in their beliefs the concept of rebirth after death. Some believe in reincarnation. The Christianity I learned in Sunday School in Stockton is based on an act of spiritual rebirth and life after death. You, Mormons, put your twist on that by believing that every person is a spirit that existed before this world existed, comes here to an Earthly existence to live their life and then continues on in the next world with connections to the other spirits in the hereafter. I have read of other religions with ancient stories of people being taken over by other spirits, like the Catholic legends of exorcism and demonic possession. But, much of those are legends and mythology, something I don’t believe in. Yet, something akin to that is now the central feature of my life.”