

# SAMANTHA'S JOURNEY INTO REAL MAGIC – PART 1

By Peter Rendell

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Smashwords Edition

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Author's notes:

All characters depicted in this work of fiction are at least 18 years of age.

This novel is an Urban Fantasy and a Rocky Romance.

Rated (18+). If you are not of legal age or are easily offended, then do not read this novel.

Erotica. No underage sex, BDSM or Incest (I consider sister on sister to be sex education; anything else is out), and no bestiality (but Greek mythology is ok). The early chapters show Merlin's illusions in a nightclub, so anything goes. Magical essence is created by sexual intercourse.

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### **Lexical Conventions:**

*'Communications by Telepathy are shown in Italics and enclosed in single quotes'.*

## DEDICATION

Thank you to my family for their support. The continuous supply of love, and mugs of tea helped me keep going.

## CHAPTER 1

[Samantha's home, Littleton, Cheshire...Mon 4th Jan 2010, 4.50am.](#)

Samantha's blue-green eyes danced as she checked her appearance in the hallway mirror. Her pale face was framed by long blond hair hanging loose to her shoulder blades. She reached inside the neck of her blouse and pulled out a medallion on a thin gold chain around her neck. She kissed the front of the medallion which showed a man carrying another across a river; the bearer was rumoured to be St Christopher. Samantha turned the medallion over and kissed the reverse; this was her ritual before all her journeys. The reverse of the medallion contained an owl and a helmet; these were the symbols of the Greek goddess Athena. The medallion was given to Samantha by her priest when she was confirmed into the Roman Catholic faith. Someday, Samantha would seek out her priest to talk about the medallion; but Samantha feared the confessional.

Samantha had thought many times about her ritual with the medallion. She had an affection for Athena and a healthy respect for Saint Christopher, the patron saint of Travelers; she hoped they would protect her, but, was it faith or just a reminder to be careful? Samantha had done some searches on Wikipedia. Athena was the goddess of wisdom, courage and justice; attributes that Samantha aspired to. Samantha felt it was perfectly reasonable to treat Athena as one of her guardian angels.

Samantha stepped back from the mirror. She was 36 years old and considered herself tall at 5'10". She almost had a model figure; a sturdy foundation garment compressed her ample breasts. She was dressed in a white blouse with a grey business skirt and jacket. A pair of dark tights covered her long slender legs. She was wearing black shoes with a short heel.

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[Samantha's home...Mon 4th Jan 2010, 5am.](#)

Samantha opened the door of her home in Littleton at 5am. She closed it behind her trying not to wake her sister Jo; the front door, of the large rambling detached Victorian house, tended to squeak despite regular oiling. Samantha and Jo had the place to themselves after their parents left to live in Spain. Samantha felt the cold on her face and followed the wisps of her breath in the sharp winter morning. She walked towards her car in the driveway.

Samantha took the country roads to the M6 and settled into a steady drive to the M40. She played the 'Best of Elton John' to relieve the tedium of the journey.

It was unusual to see an Owl on her journey, and she saw two more at almost hourly intervals. She got a creepy feeling that she was being followed, and then dismissed the idea as paranoia. She arrived at K3 without further incident. Unnoticed by Samantha, an Owl landed in a nearby tree a few moments later.

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[K3, Milton...Mon 4th Jan 2010, 8.30am.](#)

K3 was a products distribution company located on an industrial estate to the north of the town of Milton. The company was in a modern warehouse with a block of offices at one end. At 8.30, Samantha walked into reception.

"My name is Samantha Smith. I am a contractor starting today." She announced.

"Yes, Miss Smith. Please sign in. I will let Jay know that you are here." The plump, smiling receptionist turned away to answer a telephone call.

Samantha had arrived 25 minutes early. She decided to risk a vending machine coffee and settled back to wait for Jay.

Samantha's life was serendipity 'a lucky accident'. She had a history of failures with a few notable exceptions. Her Primary: school put too much emphasis on the Roman Catholic religion; she had a good knowledge of the Bible, but no faith. She had a lousy attitude at Secondary school "Won't waste time on useless studies – Latin,

History, art, domestic science” and she still chose the wrong subjects for her Ordinary Level exams. She had no ambitions for the future because of her attitude “no need to choose a career until I finish college”. She had no appreciation of real life and no concept of working for a living, except, she knew it was hard after tossing burgers for a few years in a part-time job.

Her bad attitudes continued at college; she felt that ‘statistics’ was a political language – anything can be bent to achieve a purpose. She acquired her first real Job dependent on her expected diploma. However, she failed to get the diploma. By the time her failure became known, she had already proved she was an excellent programmer and was kept on. In truth, no one else wanted the job. She was indeed at the bottom of the pile.

She changed jobs twice to further her career. After losing a job through no fault of her own, redundancy is a bitch ‘last in first out’, she took whatever came first – permanent or contract. What was a permanent job worth? ‘Four weeks’ notice’! Initial bitterness was overcome by the initial glamour of contracting; she had joined the jet set.

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[K3, Milton...Mon 4th Jan 2010, 9am.](#)

With the New Year of 2010 behind her, she was looking forward to a new project. It was her first day of a three-month contract. It was one of the few she had obtained without an interview. The agency phoned her on Christmas Eve saying ‘the contract was hers if she wanted it’. This made Samantha nervous as she hadn’t met anybody to discuss the project. She felt interviews were a two-way process. If she didn’t get the chance to grill the panel, then she wouldn’t take the job.

“Samantha Smith? I am Jay.”

Samantha smiled, stood up and shook hands with Jay.

Jay was the same height as Samantha. Jay had long black hair; her dark skin gave her the appearance of an American-Indian; she

looked a bit like the American pop-singer 'Cher'. It was her light blue eyes that were her main attraction.

"Samantha, my real name is 'Jasmine Travis', and I am a permanent employee. I prefer to be called 'Jay'. I am the development team leader. You will attend all team leader meetings as you will be expected to take command in my absence. OK so far?"

"Are you expecting to be away?" Samantha followed Jay as they walked out of reception.

"No Samantha. You just need to know my expectations. You will be responsible for all coding, testing and change issues. In many respects, we are equals. You are here to help smooth out a peak in my workload. You will be working closely with me every day. This is the office."

The main office was 'open-plan' and was brightly lit from Atrium windows halfway down its length. With windows at each end, it seemed to be a pleasant place to work. Small partitions split the office into team areas. Each of the office bays, affectionately known as pig-pens, held 6 people.

Jay led Samantha into the first bay on the left and down to desk 3 on the left.

"This is your desk. We are still waiting for your computer accounts. Let me introduce you to Audrey. If you have any queries, you should ask Audrey first." Jay left Samantha with the company and project manuals to read.

Audrey was sat at desk 4 which was behind Samantha's. They would have to turn sideways to talk to each other. Audrey had brown hair cropped at the neck. She wore a lot of makeup to highlight her blue-green eyes. She was 5'6" in height and looked skinny, some would say anorexic.

The morning went slowly as Samantha absorbed the background of the project. It soon became apparent just how much was not written down. 'It's all on the computer' Audrey said. Samantha was not impressed; she had heard that comment so many

times before. That statement was worse than “The cheque’s in the post”. Still, it was not unexpected. No need to get upset.

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[K3, Milton...Mon 4th Jan 2010, Midday.](#)

At lunchtime, Samantha was left to find her own way to the cafeteria which was deemed ‘too expensive’ by Jay and Audrey. Samantha selected ‘Prawns with Marie-Rose’ sandwiches and paid at the till. Despite the claimed unpopularity, there were few spare seats at the dining tables.

“Hi. My name is Teddy. Is this your first day?” Teddy took the chair directly opposite Samantha.

“Yes, Ted. My name is Samantha.”

“Please call me Teddy. I find it helps me get closer to people. My full name is Theodore Green, and I am an American. I am a website designer.”

Teddy’s nickname was appropriate as he was short, 5’4”, and a little on the heavy side. He said he had lost a lot of weight since leaving the states; it raised a smile from Samantha. Teddy had blue eyes and brown hair; he was cleanly shaven. Teddy ploughed into his ‘all-day’ breakfast as they quickly exchanged background information. They discovered they had chosen the same overnight accommodation and agreed to meet up later that evening.

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[The Barn, Milton...Mon 4th Jan 2010, 5pm.](#)

‘The Barn’ was a small bed and breakfast on the North-East side of the Town. It was an old Tithe-Barn that had been converted to 8 guest bedrooms and the host’s private apartment. The accommodation was split into two wings for the guests; each of the guest rooms had an en-suite with a bath or a shower. The middle of the barn held the TV lounge, dining room, kitchen and the host’s apartment was on the top floor. For the next 3 months, Samantha would occupy room 7, from Monday to Friday. Most Bed and

Breakfast houses don't do an evening meal, but, the Barn does if you have the same as everybody else.

After a long journey, a full day's work and a large evening meal, Samantha was not very wide awake. She was in the lounge, watching TV when Teddy came in carrying a mug of coffee.

"Hi, Teddy. Come and join me. Tell me your life story." Samantha turned the volume down on the TV. Teddy sat on the other end of the sofa facing Samantha. He found Samantha attractive and her confident voice was encouraging.

"Sure. I was born in Clearwater, Florida, USA. I am 34 years old. My parents are in Real Estate; they are old money wealthy. They own several large properties in Clearwater." Teddy paused to sip his coffee.

"So, not short of money then?"

"True, but I was fiercely independent. I slipped away, whenever I could, to work on a lobster boat; I would go out on the evening tide twice a week. If my parents knew they never said anything. I lived in an annexe at the back of the house so I could come and go as I pleased. I grew up quickly from the physical work. When I was 13 years old, I looked 18. I bought a motorbike and road it illegally for several years. No one made the connection between Ted the fisherman and Teddy, the school student."

"That doesn't seem right! Wasn't it child labour?"

"Hardly. Old Joe paid me generously. He taught me navigation and how to run his business. I took his boat out when he was ill, which was a couple of times a year; he was tough but still caught flu occasionally. I learnt a lot from Old Joe; he was a Seminole Indian."

"So, when did you quit?"

"When I went to Tampa Uni. Joe sold the boat and retired. He said he had only kept it going because of me."

"Symbiosis?"

"Yes. Joe is a marina manager now."

"So, what happened next?"

“In 1993, I started a business degree at the University of Tampa. I was in halls for the first year. In the second year, I bought a small property in Tampa and rented out spare rooms to other students. I did a parachute jump for charity in my third year and graduated with a Master’s degree in 1999. I took a 4-year bursary to study website construction and freelanced as a website designer. I moved to the UK, two years ago, to take a contract with British Aerospace. I bought a 2-bedroom apartment in Weston.”

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[The Barn, Milton...Mon 4th Jan 2010, 6pm.](#)

There was a knock on the door, and a gentleman entered the room. He was dressed in a black business suit. He was the proverbial ‘tall, dark and handsome’ type with a gentle face that showed a disarming smile. He had deep blue eyes that seemed to draw you in. His face was highlighted by black eyebrows and short black hair. He had suntanned white skin and looked like the American grand illusionist ‘David Copperfield’.

“Hi. My name is Merlin. Would you like a ticket for my show this evening? It will be at the Star nightclub at 11 pm. The ticket doubles as your membership for the night.”

“Hey. That could be fun.” Teddy enthused.

Samantha stared at Merlin for a few seconds, feeling a quiver in her stomach as he touched her hand. She sensed the heat in her cheeks as she blushed. Now, why did she do that? Something had piqued her interest.

“I don’t know if I can. I am half asleep as it is.” Samantha replied. She knew she shouldn’t accept the ticket. It would be at least 2am before she would get to bed.

“It’s fine, Samantha, go and have a quick nap. I will wake you at half-nine.”

Teddy’s encouragement got the better of Samantha.

“OK. What can I look forward to?” Samantha looked directly into Merlin’s eyes. Her initial embarrassment was replaced by a

radiant smile that was almost as hot. Samantha's eyelids fluttered as she peered into the deep blue pools of invitation. Samantha was lost in the deep oblivion that was open communication between herself and Merlin – body language, pheromones and animal magnetism; it was all there.

“Grand illusion is listed on the ticket; I like to think that I have an influence on everyone who comes to the show. I will need a volunteer – please step forward. I am sure you will find it a sensual experience.” Merlin's voice was soft, confident and persuasive.

Merlin handed Samantha a ticket and a second ticket to Teddy. Samantha was suddenly aware of her thoughts, questioning, ‘where had she been for the last few seconds?’ She retired to her room.

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[The Barn, Milton...Mon 4th Jan 2010, 9pm.](#)

Teddy woke Samantha at the appointed hour by a knock on her door.

“Samantha, are you ready?”

“I will be right out,” Samantha shouted.

Samantha jumped up from the bed where she had fallen asleep on top of the covers. ‘What to wear?’ The Star nightclub was only a couple of miles away. They could walk to it in half an hour. Her work suit would do. After a quick freshen up, Samantha adjusted her blouse, picked up her jacket from the bottom of the bed and put it on. She was ready.

Teddy and Samantha stepped into a crisp dry evening. Samantha shivered as she wasn't really dressed for the cold conditions. They had been told to follow the riverside until they hit the club. They walked at a brisk pace to keep warm. Samantha made a mental note to do this walk again during the day and in warmer clothes. She would be lucky if she didn't catch a chill.

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[The Star, Milton...Mon 4th Jan 2010, 10.30pm.](#)

They arrived at the club just after 10.30.

“Sir, Madam. Please go straight to the bar. Your first drink is complimentary,” A young Japanese lady in a lovely lemon-yellow dress guided them through open double doors into a large open space.

The building had been a professional theatre at some time; the seating area had been ripped out to make space for the nightclub. There was a stage at one end; it was closed by a fire curtain. They had entered halfway along the wall of the auditorium, stage-left also known as house-right. The centre of the room was highlighted by four vertical spotlights shining down from a small gantry in the middle of a very high ceiling. A dozen large oval tables surrounded the spotlight beams; with eight chairs around each table. The tables were occupied by groups of students. Samantha felt alarmingly overdressed.

There were several bars around the edge of the room. Samantha found herself drifting towards the centre bar on the opposite side. Teddy ordered drinks, and they held positions at the bar. Samantha’s first half of cider disappeared, in a less than ladylike fashion, and Teddy ordered another. The second cider was too sweet, but Samantha drank it just to be polite and promptly ordered another ‘dry’ cider.

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[The Star, Milton...Mon 4th Jan 2010, 11pm.](#)

At 11 pm, Merlin stepped into the centre spotlight.

“Good evening ladies and gentlemen. I am Merlin. I would like to show you one of my grand illusions. First, I need a lady volunteer. Don’t rush! You should consider what I am going to do before you step forward. I am going to take a lady on a journey through pregnancy.”

Merlin paused to allow the audience to consider the suggestion.

“I will take a dove and transform it into a baby in the volunteer’s womb. I will then advance the pregnancy slowly by stages. The pregnancy will be verified by a scanner used by a

qualified professional and checked visually by another volunteer from the audience. Finally, I will reverse the process and release the dove.” Merlin paused to assess the reactions.

Whispers could be heard ‘How bizarre?’, ‘Who wants to do that?’, ‘You have got to be kidding’, ‘entertainment for one?’, ‘no way!’.

“Who wishes to face this adventure?” Merlin asked.

Teddy looked at Samantha with raised eyebrows.

“I have seen something similar on TV,” Samantha responded. “‘Barry and Stuart’ did it.”

“Are you up for it?” Teddy’s expression showed clearly his concern.

Samantha was apprehensive. She couldn’t believe she was even considering it. It was such a strange idea. Could a magician make you appear to be pregnant? Could he make you feel pregnant? How would she feel?

Merlin left the spotlight. There was a lot of shuffling in the mostly silent room. The whispers were gaining volume and could be heard out of the gloom.

“Go on Mary. Don’t be a wuss.”

“Cut out the bullying.” Merlin’s voice boomed through the room. There was a long silence.

And then, there she was. A tall white woman, in a dazzling blue maxi dress, appeared in the spotlight. Splits in the side of the dress revealed the long legs of a Follies dancer. She was quite simply stunning.

“Stooge” was a shout from the audience. The regular rumble of conversations resumed.

“My lady, can I call you Angel?” Merlin’s voice was calm again.

“Yes. Merlin.” A wand mike, held by Merlin, caught Angel’s sultry mellow voice. Samantha guessed that the lady was American.

“Angel. Please choose your volunteer. I will pass a spotlight across several that I have vetted. You should say ‘next, previous or accept’.”

A spotlight began to move around the room. The light would rest on each person for ten seconds or so.

“Next, next, next.” The spotlight was on Samantha, and she swallowed hard.

“Next”. The spotlight was now on Teddy. He seemed to be far more comfortable. He smiled.

“Next, previous, previous, accept.” Samantha shivered as she was chosen.

“Well done, Eve. Please come and join Angel.” Samantha responded to the anonymous name. Teddy was grinning like the Cheshire Cat from ‘Alice in Wonderland’.

“And now, ladies and gentlemen, we have our guests.” Merlin coaxed them into the spotlight. Angel and Samantha were both fitted with collar mikes by the Japanese lady.

“Angel has volunteered to be our pregnant woman and Eve will monitor her physical changes on your behalf.” Merlin continued.

Merlin waved to a security guard. A spotlight was focused on an entrance at the back of the room. A set of double doors opened, and a medical scanner was pushed across the floor to a central position beneath the spotlights. A nurse walked beside the scanner. Merlin continued his introduction.

“The nurse is Miss Jones who is a consultant for the University Hospital. Miss Jones will operate the scanning equipment. Miss Jones, please prepare the scanner.”

Miss Jones was wearing a dark blue nurse’s uniform and looked every bit of the medical professional. She had long black hair and was 5’6” in height; she had a model figure edging on well endowed. She sat down in front of the scanner with her back to the audience. A hospital bed was pushed in behind the scanner and was parked on the right side of the scanner.

Merlin continued, "Angel. In a minute, I am going to ask you to get comfortable on the bed, but first, we must change your dress into something more appropriate for scanning."

A spinning hoop appeared above Angel's head, it was the size of a hula-hoop and shone like a neon light. The light held everyone entranced. A curtain dropped causing the hoop to bounce as it took on the extra weight. Spotlights hit the curtain to show Angel in silhouette. She held her arms in the air as her image shimmered. Just seconds later, the hoop dropped to the floor, and the curtain vanished. Angel's was now wearing a skirt and top; her midriff was exposed.

"Angel. In case you haven't realised, you are not wearing any panties. At set points in the illusion, you will be asked to provide a urine sample here on the bed. You will be provided with a towel to give you some privacy. If you are not comfortable with this, then we should stop right now."

Angel smiled. "I am fine, thank you, Merlin. I am used to modelling for students."

There was raucous applause from the audience.

"Eve. Take this tape and measure Angel."

"Angel. Please allow Eve to take your vital statistics." Merlin stepped to one side.

Samantha had never done any acting at school; she felt she was a bit mechanical and should measure Angel with a little more flourish.

"36-24-36" Samantha shouted in her eagerness; the cider had eased her embarrassment.

"Angel. Please get on the bed." Merlin held out his hand. Angel stepped out of the hoop and climbed onto the bed with the grace of a ballet dancer.

"Miss Jones, I assume that you have brought the testing kits I asked for."

"Yes, Merlin. I have everything here."

“Please verify that Angel is not pregnant. Angel. Please provide the first sample.”

Miss Jones gave Angel a pregnancy testing kit and a large bath towel. Miss Jones turned on the scanner. Several screens came to life around the room. Several minutes passed, and the audience became restless. A pregnancy test strip was placed at the bottom of the bed.

“Miss Jones. Are you satisfied that Angel is not pregnant?”

“Yes, Merlin. The scanner is clear, and I have a clear pregnancy test stick. Angel is not pregnant.”

“Angel. Are you ready?”

“Yes, Merlin.”

Merlin took a gold sheet and covered Angel’s abdomen. He produced a dove from a silk hankie. It is now such an old trick that it passed in total silence. He then placed the dove under the gold sheet.

“And now, ladies and gentlemen, watch that little bump very carefully. This is where the magic begins.”

Samantha watched the bump as it appeared to merge with Angel. Merlin pulled back the gold sheet; there was no sign of the dove.

“Eve. Would you please take Angel’s measurements?”

The cider was beginning to effect Samantha, and she fumbled with the tape. She didn’t believe what she was seeing and had to re-measure several times.

“37-28-36” Samantha stated. ‘What? How can that be?’ Samantha’s thoughts screamed out. ‘Angel has an extra inch on her bust and four on her waist.’

Samantha was stunned. Was this real? She was so close to the action that it was a case of laugh or scream. She began to shake with a touch of fear.

“Eve. Will you please verify that Angel is all she appears to be? Check that she is not wearing any prosthetics or anything extra in any way.”

“Angel. Please forgive Eve for any groping. Tell me, Angel. How do you feel?”

There was a long silence. Samantha was frozen as she waited for Angel’s reply.

“Pregnant.” Angel’s voice was positive. “My breasts feel tingly and swollen.”

“Eve. You must measure Angel again.”

Samantha was running on autopilot. “37-28-36” she announced monotonically. Samantha didn’t believe it and rechecked the measurements. ‘How could that be? Merlin couldn’t mess about with the tape measure as it was in my hands all the time.’

“Miss Jones. Please verify that Angel is now pregnant.” Merlin continued.

Miss Jones handed another towel and pregnancy kit to Angel. After a couple of minutes of fumbling under the towel, another test strip was placed at the bottom of the bed. Miss Jones switched on the scanner, the screens around the room burst into life.

“Miss Jones. Please tell me your observations and professional conclusions.”

“Merlin. The sonogram is showing a small foetus. The test kit is showing positive but will be another 5 minutes before it shows the term. From current evidence, I would have to say that Angel is 16 weeks pregnant.”

The audience clapped enthusiastically Merlin moved towards the side of the bed.

“Angel. Are you willing to go further?”

“Yes, Merlin.” Angel sounded bemused and excited.

Once again, Angel was covered with the golden sheet.

“Watch that bump very carefully.” Merlin’s voice was warm and melodic. “Angel. Please count forward from 16 and stop when you feel that you have gone as far as you want to.”

“16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26...”

The gold sheet rose steadily into the air. The audience watched with a bemused fascination.

“Oh, I do feel strange,” Angel whispered.

“Miss Jones. Please do your verifications.”

“Eve. Please measure Angel.”

Samantha’s attention was riveted on Angel’s belly button.

“38-32-38” Samantha announced. How could this be? She could clearly see the pregnancy. She had measured it. Another pregnancy test was dropped at the end of the bed. Miss Jones switched off the scanner and helped Angel to clean up.

“OK. We will stop there. Angel. Feel free to get up and walk around. Tell us how you feel.”

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[The Star, Milton...Mon 4th Jan 2010, 11.30pm.](#)

“I feel fine,” Angel said as she sat up on the bed. She swung her legs to the side of the bed and accepted Samantha’s offer of support as she stood up. Angel grabbed Samantha’s left hand and placed it on her bump. Samantha shivered; she could feel the heat in her face, chest and arms.

“How did you manage to pee when you were asked to?” Samantha’s first thought escaped.

“Keep off that subject. I am carrying a lot of extra pressure here.” Angel responded.

Samantha walked Angel to the bar where they both drank orange juice. Teddy had disappeared.

“Angel. Are you really pregnant?” The voice came from just behind Samantha who turned to see a woman in her forties. “May I touch you?”

“Yes, and Yes,” Angel responded with a big smile. She repeated these assignments with several more admiring ladies.

Samantha suddenly felt bad. If any of those ladies were trying for a baby, then this could generate hope that Merlin could help them or a nasty taste in the mouth.

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[The Star, Milton...Mon 4th Jan 2010, Midnight.](#)

“Ladies and Gentlemen. Angel. Are you ready?”

It didn't seem like half an hour had gone. Samantha and Angel walked back to the spotlights. Merlin's ring appeared above Angel's head, a curtain dropped, and a few seconds later, both fell to the floor. There was Angel back in her long evening dress and most definitely not pregnant. She was holding the white dove.

There were tears in Angel's eyes.

“My god, that was wonderful.” She announced. “The rush of new feelings is just overwhelming. Merlin, you are a bastard! You said you would reverse it slowly. This sudden loss is too much!”

“Eve. Please verify that this lady is Angel.” Angel stepped out of the hoop and Merlin picked it up. Angel pulled Samantha close and drew her into a kiss. Samantha shivered to the base of her spine; she felt the warmth of Angel's welcome.

“Yes. This is Angel.” Samantha shouted. ‘How on earth would I know? I have only just met her.’ Samantha thought.

To thunderous applause, Samantha looked around the audience to see the type of person applauding. When she turned back to look at the spotlight area, Angel and Merlin had gone.

“Are you OK?” Teddy appeared on Samantha's left.

“Yeah. That was amazing. I could literally feel Angel's pregnancy. How can that be? Everyone will assume it was an illusion, or that they had been deceived by hypnosis; but, I touched her. I would swear I felt the baby kicking. The pregnancy seemed real. The pregnancy tests confirmed each stage of the pregnancy.”

“Oh. Come on. Angel just left with Merlin in a Taxi. She was most certainly not pregnant.”

“Didn't you see her at the bar?”

“Only from a distance. I was trying to get to know some of the locals.”

“That’s just bloody typical. Now, how are we going to discuss it?”

“Look if this is bugging you, then, I think you have to take the Sherlock Holmes approach: when you have eliminated the impossible then whatever is left, however improbable, must be the truth. If you truly believe that the pregnancy was real, then you would have to concede that only real magic could have created it.”

## CHAPTER 2

K3...Tue 5th Jan 2010, Midday.

Samantha had found it hard to keep her mind on work at K3. She saw Teddy in the cafeteria at lunchtime.

"How's it going, Samantha? You look a bit pale."

"Thanks, Teddy. I am fine. I don't get out enough."

"Not a hangover, surely? You only had a few ciders."

"Too much sugar, I guess. I don't like sweet cider. This cultivated stuff isn't a patch on the old farmhouse Scrumpy."

"Have you had any more thoughts on last night? How was it done? Some form of prosthetics, a bodysuit perhaps? A body swap seems unlikely as we had our eyes on Angel all the time."

"No, you didn't. You were trying to chat up the locals. I saw and felt it all, and still, I have no idea. I've spent all morning trying to work out how it was done. I would have thought some form of prosthetic, but her pregnancy felt so real, and the pregnancy tests are difficult to fake. I felt her abdomen as I took the measurements. It was firm, warm and very sensual. I must get my mind off it, or I won't get any work done."

"Try self-hypnosis. It works for me."

"Yes, and for me. Self-hypnosis is very useful."

"Can we talk tomorrow?" Teddy continued. "I have been invited to join the lads for a few beers. I would invite you to join us, but, it's a private club where guest numbers are restricted. Another time perhaps?"

"Sure. Last night was more than enough for me for a few days. See you tomorrow."

Samantha went to the toilets, locked herself in a cubicle, and used a trigger word to put herself into a deep trance. She instructed her mind to hold back all memories of last night until she was back at 'The Barn' and in the shower.

Samantha usually worked a couple of extra hours on a Tuesday, so she could leave early on Friday, but she found it almost impossible to control her drifting thoughts; those memories of Angel were just too strong. She left work at 5pm and hastened back to 'The Barn'.

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[Samantha's room at the Barn...Tue 5th Jan 2010, 5.30pm.](#)

Samantha went straight to her room, undressed and stepped into the shower. As her mind played back the scenes from last night, she became aware of strong arousal and pushed herself to relief. As her legs began to buckle, she slammed the shower temperature control to 'Cold'. The shock was enough for her to slow her racing thoughts. She eased the temperature control back to 'Warm' and washed away the problem, convincing herself it was all an illusion. She dressed casually in a blouse and a skirt and went down to the dining room.

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[The dining room at the Barn...Tue 5th Jan 2010, 6.30pm.](#)

Samantha was the last to sit down to dinner. The Lancashire hotpot was excellent; she declined the pudding and retired to the lounge.

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[The lounge at the Barn...Tue 5th Jan 2010, 7pm.](#)

"Come in Eve." It was Angel. Samantha stood in the doorway, paranoid with suspicion.

"Oh, come on Eve. Did you think you were the only person that Merlin invited?"

"No. I just hadn't expected to see you here. It's good to see you. My name is Samantha Smith." Samantha sat next to Angel on the sofa. "Is Angel your real name?"

"Yes, Samantha. There were no volunteers last night. I was the fall-back plan."

"I had no idea."

“I am not surprised. If you ever get a chance to plan such a production, don’t forget the fall-back plan.”

“Lesson noted. When did you become my teacher?”

“When I saw your attack of nerves last night; your blushing was beautiful.”

Samantha felt her face flush. “How did you feel last night?”

“Pregnant of course. I don’t know how Merlin did it. I just know that I was really pregnant.”

“How is that possible?” Samantha’s disbelief was clear. She had seen it with her own eyes but still did not believe it.

“I was pregnant! Believe it! Deal with it!” Angel put an arm around Samantha and pulled her closer. “Samantha. There is more to life than you know. Real magic exists.”

“No! I don’t believe it.” Samantha had already dismissed that possibility.

“Samantha. Science cannot prove everything. Real Magic is yours for the taking.”

Angel watched closely as Samantha subconsciously played with the medallion on her necklace. Angel noted the symbols on each side of the medallion. For a few moments, Angel was distracted in thought ‘where have I seen those symbols before?’ And then she refocused.

“Merlin asked me to give you this ticket. He would like you to volunteer again. Last night was the last of my contract as his assistant. He will be appointing a new one tonight.”

“Well, it won’t be me. I am already committed. What will I have to do tonight?”

“I don’t know, but, lighten up. Real magic exists. It is a lot of fun.”

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[The lounge at the Barn...Tue 5th Jan 2010, 7pm.](#)

Angel leaned forward and kissed Samantha on the cheek. Without another word, she stood up and left the room. As Angel left the Barn, she pulled out her mobile phone.

“Merlin, Eve’s real name is Samantha Smith. She has the medallion of Athena. You must test her. She has the aura of a magic user.”

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[The Star...Tue 5th Jan 2010, 10.30pm.](#)

Samantha arrived at the Star at 10.30 and met Merlin in the Foyer.

“Good evening Samantha. I am so glad you could come.”

“Good evening Merlin.”

“I have set the stage for the illusion. The show will be recorded for my benefit and will be shown on the big screens. Will you help me again?”

“Ok. I will try to ignore the cameras; it shouldn’t be too difficult.”

Samantha was a bag of nerves. What had she let herself in for? She headed for the bar. After two halves of dry cider, Samantha felt a little better.

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[The Star...Tue 5th Jan 2010, 11pm](#)

At 11pm, the show began.

“Ladies and gentlemen. I am Merlin. I am a master of illusion. I will deceive you in any way I can – hypnosis, mind-reading, sleight of hand or the bending of light, to list just a few of the possibilities. I would like 2 volunteers for my next illusion.”

Samantha stepped forward, and a male student stood up. Samantha looked around with some trepidation. She wanted to do this, but she might step aside if anyone else stood up. There was a long, hushed pause.

“Eve was here last night looking after Angel. Does anyone object to her helping me again?”

Merlin waited for a few moments and then turned towards the male student.

“Well young man, did you volunteer? I will punish anyone who is bullying you.” There was a notable rumble of murmuring in the audience.

“Yes, Merlin. I volunteered.”

The youth was a blond, skinny academic dressed in T-shirt and jeans. A typical ‘Shaggy’ from ‘Scooby Do’.

“I hope you thought carefully about that. As you know, a magician’s assistant is traditionally an attractive woman. I will ask you again. Would you like to be my assistant?”

“Yes, Merlin. I would love to be your assistant.” There was a hint of excitement in the reply.

Merlin’s hoop appeared above the student’s head. A translucent curtain dropped around the student. A backlight showed the student as a silhouette. Samantha was standing very close to the hoop and could see more than most.

The man’s clothes disappeared to reveal a lightweight male. He obviously didn’t do any weight training. His cock shrank rapidly to nothing and was replaced by a vagina. Samantha’s eyes noted the expanding hips and shrinking waist before her eyes drifted, slowly to the man’s chest. Samantha stared, as the nipples puffed up and the areola spread. The surrounding flesh was notably distended.

‘How is this possible?’ Samantha’s thoughts were flowing through treacle. Samantha stared at the breasts that were still swelling and covered by a bra and a white blouse. A loose black mini-skirt and large mesh stockings covered a magnificent pair of legs. A few seconds later, the hoop dropped to the floor.

“Ladies and gentlemen, I give you Fey.”

Fey was in high heels. Her long blond hair flowed down her back. Her breasts stretched her blouse to its limits.

“Eve. I wish you to run your hands over Fey as if you were frisking her for drugs. For the benefit of the audience, I want you to verify that Fey is all female.”

“It’s alright honey, I won’t bight.” Fey’s voice was sultry and sexy. “Keep going honey and don’t forget inside my knickers.” Fey was taunting Samantha.

Samantha ran her palms down Fey’s sides and with great reluctance into Fey’s knickers.

“Ooh. Very nice.” Fey cooed.

“Thank you, Eve!” Merlin’s voice pierced Samantha’s brain. “Tell me what you think. Is Fey all female?”

“Yes, Merlin. Fey is all woman. She has a pussy and is aroused.”

“OK Eve. That’s too much information. Thank you for your help. Ladies and gentlemen, a round of applause for Eve.”

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[The Star...Tue 5th Jan 2010, 11.20pm](#)

Merlin indicated that Samantha could go to the bar. After another half of cider, Samantha felt a little better, but, was fighting to maintain sanity. It just wasn’t possible to change a man into a woman. Was it? She ordered another half of dry cider and gulped it down. She was failing to believe what she had just seen. It didn’t matter to the audience; all they had seen was a silhouette and would believe it was a manipulated image. They would think it was a substitution illusion. But Samantha had seen the change in continuous detail. It could only be Real Magic.

Samantha needed to apologise to Fey for feeling her up. Yes. Where is Fey? Oh, there she is, helping Merlin move some boxes.

“Now Eve, will you please join us for the next act?”

‘Oh dear. What is he up to now?’ Samantha thought.

\*\*\*

[The Star...Tue 5th Jan 2010, 11.30pm](#)

Samantha stepped into the spotlight. Merlin’s hoop hovered above her, and a curtain dropped around her. Suddenly, she was

nervous. Samantha felt a warm tingle flow from the top of her head to the tip of her toes. She sensed she was 'being scanned'. The hoop dropped to the floor. Samantha was now dressed in a yellow, skin-tight, latex cat-suit. With her mind preoccupied with the thought of 'being scanned', she hadn't noticed the change of dress.

Merlin guided Samantha to a body shaped box; it had separate sections for arms and legs and was held in position by a vertical frame. The frame was tilted back slightly so that Samantha rested against the floor of each section; her hands and feet were sticking out for all to see. Merlin strapped Samantha in; her arms and legs were completely immobilised.

"Ladies and gentlemen. I have here several sharp blades which I will now use to slice Eve into pieces."

Merlin cut Samantha's legs off and laid them carefully on a table just to one side of the frame. Samantha's arms were soon beside them. Merlin removed Samantha's head and placed it gently on the table in a vertical position. Samantha glanced sideways to see the frame. All that was left was her torso wrapped in the glistening yellow latex.

"God, my tits look huge." Indeed, they were now a double-G.

Samantha was getting a little hyper under the increased alcohol. Despite her diced body, her nipples felt pumped. She could still feel the touch of the latex. She had never worn latex before, and it was giving her a deep loving caress. No wonder everyone was going mad. For a fleeting moment, she wondered if this illusion was for the audience, or for her. Samantha was starting to panic.

"Eve. How are you feeling?"

"What's the joke? I am in pieces."

"Tell me, Eve, can you still feel all the parts of your body?"

"Yes. Merlin. I feel as though I am still in one piece. I can see my torso over there. If I breathe out and hold my tummy in, the torso does the same. Can I believe this?" Samantha murmured.

Merlin waved a hand and produced a wand that glowed purple. He ran the wand across Samantha's stomach. She squirmed, and a deep moan was heard.

"Don't be so mean to her." There was a single shout from the audience. At least someone was convinced that was her real torso.

Merlin reattached Samantha's stranded limbs and head. He pulled Samantha out of the box and wrapped her in a gold cape. He spun her around and with a flourish removed the cape.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I give you Eve."

Samantha was dressed in a long black evening dress and glided to the bar. The spotlight followed Samantha and then faded out. Samantha was quickly surrounded by randy males and offered free drinks. She accepted another half of dry cider.

Samantha continued with uncertainty. How was any of that possible? Does Real Magic exist?

\*\*\*

[The Star...Tue 5th Jan 2010, Midnight](#)

"Are you ready to go?" Merlin had appeared behind Samantha.

"Yes, very ready."

"Your room or mine?" Merlin asked with a poker face.

"Mine," Samantha replied feeling lightheaded.

\*\*\*

[The Star...Tue 5th Jan 2010, 00.30am](#)

Merlin took Samantha back to her room at 'The Barn'; he took the armchair, and Samantha sat on her bed.

"Did you have fun?" Merlin asked.

"Umm, Yes," Samantha said with some hesitation.

"Did you like the latex?"

"Yes." Samantha purred in an alcoholic euphoria. "I saw its potential for illusions."

"Did you find it sexy?"

"Yes," Samantha said a little louder. "I am normally shy and retiring, and now I am a complete exhibitionist. It seems my 'shy'

setting has been moved to 'bold and brassy'. What am I saying? I think I have had a couple too many. It was kind of you to bring me back here. How did you do those tricks?"

"I thought you would have understood by now. It was Real Magic! You saw Angel earlier this evening. Didn't you notice she had larger breasts?"

"Oh, Merlin. I was polite when we talked; I was looking at her face, not her tits!"

Samantha's befuddled brain was still trying to cope. On balance, she liked Merlin. What balance? They had barely talked a dozen sentences. And yet, Samantha felt their bodies were already in deep discussions. Merlin's last illusion seemed like a seduction; the latex seemed to be more important than the illusion. The illusion seemed to be just for her, as a sensory experience; the audience would have assumed it to be just an illusion.

"Angel said you did not believe she was pregnant."

"Yeah. It seemed impossible. Despite the evidence of my own senses during the show, I still found it hard to believe that Angel was pregnant. I just don't know what to say. I thought it must have been a prosthetic, but I felt her abdomen, and it felt warm and sensual. I considered hypnosis; I even considered that Angel had a pregnant twin. I have been trying to come up with an explanation all day."

"And how do you explain being cut up into so many pieces? How can I make you believe it was Real Magic?"

"Merlin. I am sensing that I have had too much to drink. I am very grateful for you bringing me back to my bed. I feel that you are a gentleman and will not take advantage of me right now." Samantha paused to fight the alcohol.

"It seems likely that I will not remember much of this in the morning. Can you make it so that I will wake in the morning and know that I was not hypnotised?"

"Yes."

“Can you do a trick for me, so I cannot fail to believe that it’s real magic?”

“Yes, ‘for you’ or ‘to you’?”

“I guess that it would have to be ‘to me’, otherwise I still won’t believe it.”

The alcohol got the better of her and Samantha fell asleep.

\*\*\*

[The Star...Tue 5th Jan 2010, 1am](#)

On the way to his room, Merlin pulled his phone from his pocket and called Angel.

“Angel. Hi. It’s Merlin.”

“Hi, Merlin. Did you test Samantha?” Angel couldn’t contain her excitement.

“Yes. You were right. The ring confirms your readings. Samantha has a latent skill as a magic user. The ring has activated her abilities to control magical essence. She has also been given the ability to control magical powers. I haven’t seen that one before. I can only guess what that means.”

“What do you mean – magical powers?”

“Like I said. I haven’t a clue. I have reactivated Samantha’s medallion to protect her.”

## CHAPTER 3

[The Barn...Wed 6th Jan 2010, 6am](#)

Samantha awoke at 6 am. It was several minutes before her addled brain decided that something wasn't right. She swung her legs over the side of the bed.

'Oh, that felt weird'.

It seemed very possible that she was still drunk or dreaming. She seemed to have a lot more in front of her than she was used to. She stood up, pulled her nightdress over her head, and let it drop to the floor.

"What the fuck? My tits look huge." Samantha walked to the wardrobe and opened the door containing a full-length mirror. She turned sideways to see her profile. A strangled scream escaped her throat as she saw the tail rising from her sternum.

"What did I say to Merlin last night? Something about 'do a trick for me' ... 'to me'?"

Samantha had no idea how long she had just stood and stared at that tail. It ran up her back to her neckline; it was the same colour as her hair.

'Can I still be under hypnosis? This all looks very real. Could hypnosis create such an illusion?' It was at that moment that she realised that she was wide awake.

'Could she control it?' Samantha tried to think sad, the funeral of a cousin, and the tail fell to the back of her knees. She wondered as to its purpose. Was it a mood monitor or a tool of seduction? Some base instinct made her feel she should display her tail in all its glory. She swayed her body from side to side as she watched the seductive twitch she had seen so often in cat's tails. She tried to emulate various moods, but she was not a good actress. Eventually, common sense prevailed as she considered ways to hide it.

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[The Barn...Wed 6th Jan 2010, 6am](#)

[K3...Wed 6th Jan 2010, 8.30am](#)

Samantha arrived at K3 at 8.30am. She had pushed her tail between her legs and hid it in her knickers; she had expected to find it uncomfortable to sit on her tail, but it had slid into her body shape as if it was part of the design. She was wearing a pair of black cord slacks to hide everything. It had been almost twenty minutes before Samantha discovered that Merlin had modified her bra, blouse and a business jacket. Samantha hoped that no one would notice her enhanced bosom.

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[K3...Wed 6th Jan 2010, Middyay](#)

At midday, Samantha headed to the cafeteria with some trepidation.

“Hey! Samantha! How did it go last night?” Teddy sat down beside Samantha.

“I cannot tell you here. It’s too public How about after dinner tonight?”

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[K3...Wed 6th Jan 2010, 0.30pm](#)

Samantha returned to the office. Her project account logins had arrived. She became very busy getting familiar with the project. She managed to keep her mind on the job and left promptly at 5pm.

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[The lounge at the Barn...Wed 6th Jan 2010, 6.30pm](#)

Teddy was watching TV when Samantha entered the lounge at the Barn.

“Ok. What’s so embarrassing that you couldn’t tell me at lunch?”

“Angel met me here; she had been waiting for me. She claimed she really was pregnant on Monday night. She said that it was Real Magic.”

“No!” Teddy interrupted.

“Yes. And that was just the beginning. She gave me a ticket for last night and urged me to volunteer again. She said Monday night was her last night as Merlin’s assistant and he was about to appoint a new assistant. Merlin’s first act changed a male student into a woman.”

“That’s impossible unless you believe Angel’s claim?”

“Yes. I agree, but I was so close, I saw everything. I saw the student’s waist narrow and hips expand. His breasts grew out like Honeydews. His new clothes flowed over him, sorry I meant her. I saw her change in every detail. The audience saw it in silhouette.”

“You’re kidding me!”

“No! Merlin introduced the new woman as ‘Fey’”

“So, what happened to Fey?”

“Merlin asked me to verify that she was all woman. I had to frisk her as if I was a customs officer. I got my face buried between her huge breasts. I was deeply embarrassed. I wouldn’t do that in public and certainly not in front of the cameras.”

“Ooh. Did he give you the DVD?”

“No, he did not!” Samantha feigned indignance.

“So, what happened next?”

“Merlin used his ring on me and changed my dress into a yellow, skin-tight, latex cat-suit.”

“Oh wow. I must ask him for the DVD.” Teddy was ogling a perceived image.

“Fey became Merlin’s assistant and began dragging a large box from the back of the stage. I was placed in the box and securely strapped in. Merlin cut off my arms and legs and put them on a side table. He cut my head off and placed it on the table. I could see my torso. My breasts looked huge in that shiny latex.”

“Oh! I wonder what I could offer Merlin for the DVD?”

“He put me back together and changed me back to my original dress. The show was over. I had drunk too much cider by the time

Merlin was ready to go. He brought me back here and helped me up to my room.”

Samantha was considering a dangerous notion; should she expose herself to Teddy? There seemed to be no other way of proving she wasn't hypnotised.

“I asked Merlin how he did the tricks. He said it was real-magic. I said I didn't believe him. I stupidly asked him to do a trick for me, no, 'to me' so that I couldn't fail to believe him.”

“So, that is why your breasts are bigger, and you are leaking?”

Now Samantha knew, for sure, that she wasn't hypnotised. Teddy could see her changes. And, what was that about her leaking?

“Oh shit. Sorry, Teddy. I must go and see Merlin.”

Samantha gave Merlin a call. “Can we meet as soon as possible?”

\*\*\*

[Samantha's room at the Barn...Wed 6th Jan 2010, 7pm](#)

Samantha went to her room. She removed her slacks and knickers. Her tail seemed pleased to be free; it was twitching in a frenzy. There was a knock at the door. Samantha opened it and peered around the edge to see who it was. It was Merlin. She let him in without a thought about her half-naked body.

“How are you feeling?” Merlin asked as he sat in the armchair.

“Confused. I don't know why it took me so long to accept Real Magic exists. I don't know if I am happy or afraid.” Her tail was twitching nervously.

“Why would you be afraid?”

“I am defenceless. You can do whatever you like with me.”

“Is that an invitation? We could have a lot of fun.” Merlin was staring at Samantha with a broad smile. There was something in those deep blue eyes that floated Samantha's mind. She had thrown down the gauntlet and received a challenging response. Here she was, telling Merlin how she felt, without any thought to the consequences. Samantha had hesitated for far too long. It was

evident that she was seriously considering his question. She looked deep into Merlin's eyes searching for any sign of deception.

"Please do something about my tail and my breasts."

Merlin waved his hands in the air and produced a breast pump that he handed to Samantha. Samantha squirmed at the thought.

"Have fun. The breast pump will give you lots of pleasure. Don't worry about the batteries. They won't run out. Your tail will disappear over the next few hours."

Merlin turned and let himself out.

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[Mirage Hotel in Las Vegas, USA...Wed 6th Jan 2010, 8pm](#)

Meanwhile, at 8pm, in a Dressing Room of the Mirage Hotel in Las Vegas, USA ....

David Bald-Eagle and Josie Whitetail were relaxing after rehearsals. They were discussing the act for the upcoming charity fundraiser. It was one of many approaching Siegfried and Roy's retirement in April of this year. Bald-Eagle's signature act was changing Josie into a black panther.

"Josie. It's too risky."

"But it is our trademark act."

"Yes, on a big stage or in a circus ring. Here, we will be too close to the audience. You would have to be in a cage, and I have never liked cages."

"Why the cage?"

"Because this hotel is the home of Siegfried and Roy. They are still very sensitive about the incident with Montecore."

"So, Montecore was a white tiger. I will be a black panther; there is a difference! Besides, that incident was seven years ago."

"And it seems like yesterday."

David Bald-Eagle was tall at 6'2; he had short black hair and grey eyes. He had a leathery suntanned skin. He was clean shaven and looked after his trim, slender build. He was wearing a black shirt and navy trousers. He would have to change both as they were

stained from the rehearsal. He had spent the last 10 of his 40 years committed to entertainment. He was born in Las Vegas in 1970. He was a native American Indian; one of the last surviving members of the Paiute Tribe. David had been raised in the local schools. As a Southern Paiute, he spoke the Colorado River Numic language, Native American and Spanish. He was well educated and fought his way through a mire of college prejudices to graduate. Most of his brothers had left the area to become sky-scraper monkeys. The few who remained were in the police force.

David, by lineage, was the tribe's medicine man. David mourned the loss of the Indian culture and their lands, but that was history that he could do nothing about. Many old beliefs had been replaced by modern science. Their knowledge of herbs and spices had been passed to the medical services for the benefit of mankind. The role of the medicine man had been reduced to taking care of tribal religion, mental health, history and education. The choice of medicine man would skip generations. The choice depended on the mental capabilities of the candidate; inherited genetics was not enough. The medicine Man was expected to be an Adept on the Astral Plane; spirit travelling was a necessity. You needed to observe the mental health of your friends. In the old days, you would be monitoring your enemies; not so much now.

Just before he died, the Medicine Man gave David a magic ring. The ring was about four feet in diameter and looked like a hula-hoop. The ring had been captured from the Spanish and kept by the tribe. The ring contained the secrets of Real Magic. David had learned how to use the ring by laying it on the floor and meditating within its space.

David decided to study stage magic as a matter of personal safety. If he was ever observed to be doing Real Magic, then he could explain it away as an illusion. He was mentored by Doug Hennings until Doug died from cancer in the year 2000.

David had never married. He was fond of Josie but had never mentioned his feelings to her. He teased her mercilessly both sensually and physically. Somehow, it had always been considered as banter. Josie had been so severely damaged by her marriage to ZED that David felt Josie needed space and time. David would not make the first move.

\*\*\*

[Mirage Hotel in Las Vegas, USA...Wed 6th Jan 2010, 8pm](#)

“David, we have to do the act. Perhaps a Cheetah would be less threatening.”

“Yes. I guess we could start by stretching your long legs just a little bit more. You could dance on two legs and then on four. We could add some Henna tattoos. With the appropriate lighting, we could show your legs changing during the dance. If we choose a blue-screen dress, then we can project a cheetah pattern. You could then pose head-on to the audience. I would put a collar around your neck and attach a leash; that will get all the bondage fans going. I will walk you around the room on two legs. As you walk away towards the rear of the stage, you will lose your dress and shake your delightful derriere. You will drop to all fours. As you walk across the back of the stage, you will stretch your limbs seductively to emulate the grace of the cheetah. Your breasts will become firmer and covered in fur. You will pause, for effect, several times to allow the audience and the cameras to capture your form. You will then pass through a wisp of smoke to emerge fully converted to your cheetah form.”

“OK. I like that. I would feel every part of the body change.”

David welcomed Josie’s approval; she was a valued assistant.

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[Mirage Hotel in Las Vegas, USA...Wed 6th Jan 2010, 8.05pm](#)

Josie Whitetail was 31 years old. She was born on the reservation in 1978. Her height of 6’ gave her the stature of an Amazon. She was too tall for many illusions, but she was a major distraction making it easy to mislead the audience. Her model figure

“36d-24-36” gave her a steady high fashion income. She was strictly ‘by invitation only’. She had the long legs of a Follies dancer, so she was a natural for evening dresses. Most of the students at the art college didn’t know how lucky they were when Josie posed nude, once a year.

Josie Whitetail was a close friend of Angel. They did most of the highbrow events together. Josie had first met Angel back in 96 when Angel was backpacking America. They were both 18 years old. Angel was on a gap year before selecting her University. Josie was working in a diner. She was building up her college fund. Angel worked at the diner for several months before continuing the next leg of her tour. Angel shared accommodation with Josie, and her bed.

In 97, Josie and Angel were roomies at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Josie was studying at the ‘School of Theatre, Film and Television. When she wasn’t studying, Josie was a ‘track and field’ star. She was a popular member of the Bruins. Her speciality was middle-distance running. She had several medals for 10,000 metres.

Josie’s thoughts refocused on the present.

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[Mirage Hotel in Las Vegas, USA...Wed 6th Jan 2010, 8.10pm](#)

“How many performances do we have to do?”

“Only two; there is a tribute show and an awards ceremony. They are expecting the same audience to turn up to both, so they are hoping for two different acts. I have been asked to plan for three shows, and they will choose two. I was going to offer cheetah and a choice of panther or flying.”

“Oh. You can’t offer the Flying act. It is a bit tame compared with David Copperfield’s act!”

“Yes. The Grand Canyon illusion was spectacular, but we will be indoors.”

There was a beep from Josie’s Tablet computer. Josie checked her emails. There was a message from Angel:

“Subject has tested positive.”

Under a hypnotic trigger, and unknowingly, Josie used telepathy to relay the message to her Ex. The blank moment was noted by David who was watching Josie very closely.

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In the Caribbean, on the island of Cuba...Wed 6th Jan 2010,  
8.10pm

ZED was Whitetail's Ex. He was old school arrogant and used only surnames because he was lazy. He had strong hypnotic controls on Whitetail which he renewed regularly. Whenever she got any news, she unknowingly used telepathy to relay the information to ZED.

ZED was the head of a high-status American-Greek family. Their Orthodox upbringing and enthusiasm resulted in a large family. ZED held one of the five rings of Gaia. ZED was not blessed with long life like Merlin but, by using the powers of the ring, he had avoided his 'Day of Reckoning'. If the ring was held by ZED and a pregnant woman when she was at the 26-weeks term, then ZED's spirit could move into the new foetus. At that point, his old body died. The pregnant woman was usually a granddaughter or great-granddaughter. If they were very beautiful, then ZED would make them pregnant himself despite strong warnings of possible deformity. ZED wrote-off the warnings as religious twaddle. He felt he was reasserting himself. The current ZED had been around for 400 years. He had been female several times. He felt he had a unique perspective on life.

ZED's current body was born in 1974. It was 35 years old. ZED had short black hair and blue eyes. His rough orange skin came from his Greek heritage. He was 6' tall and had a slender build. He was cleanly shaven. He was usually wearing Y-fronts, jeans, T-shirts, socks and trainers. He never wore a tie and rarely dressed for the occasion.

From 1-Oct-1997 to 30-Jun-1999, ZED and Bald-Eagle did alternate shows in Las Vegas as if they were competitors. Josie made

guest appearances on ZED's show. ZED loved to hypnotise Josie and to leave her floating in the middle of the audience.

In July 2001, Merlin, Bald-Eagle and ZED were competing at the Summer Fayre at the Magic Castle. ZED asked Josie to be his assistant. Josie fell for ZED hard, and they become a couple. They got married on 1-Jun-2002 and moved into a condo in the Paradise Village in Las Vegas. They lived happily for a couple of years where ZED allowed Josie to play. Josie had a fetish for hypnosis and ZED exploited his position. ZED became bored with Josie, and she spent long periods in a trance as a household slave. Josie was rescued by Angel when Angel dropped in unexpectedly. After a few days of continuous sleep treatment by David Bald-Eagle, Josie was pulled back to full consciousness. Josie was taken away for recuperation. ZED did not contest the divorce on the 4th of July-2007. He retreated to his family home on the island of Cuba. ZED had left Josie with several programmed behaviours. Josie will relay any news she gets to ZED, instantly, using telepathy.

The news "Subject tested positive" had ZED very excited.

## CHAPTER 4

[Back at the Barn in Samantha's room...Wed 6th Jan 2010. 9pm.](#)

"I did knock; I guessed you were preoccupied," Merlin announced as he entered her room.

"Yes." Samantha purred.

"I thought you could use a little help." Merlin produced a goat's milking machine. He placed it on the floor on Samantha's right side so that she could clearly see the unit. Merlin plugged it in and turned it on. The soft thrum of an electric pump could be heard. Merlin connected the suction cups to Samantha's swollen nipples, and she floated into bliss.

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[Samantha's room...Wed 6th Jan 2010. 9.30pm.](#)

"Samantha. Samantha..." Merlin was calling Samantha back down from her trance. She knew she had been deeply hypnotised. She felt the pressure drop as Merlin stopped the machine. Her nipples still tingled.

"Yes." She answered. "Does the milk go somewhere useful?"

"The milk will go to the hospital maternity unit. Will you be my assistant for tonight?"

"Yes," Samantha responded. In her current, post-orgasmic, state, she would agree to anything.

"Good. Do you want me to change anything before the show?"

"Make me a sexy woman again. Right now, I look like a cow. I suspect you've overindulged in your fantasies."

"Perhaps, but you look wonderful."

"You keep me looking like a beautiful woman, and I will allow it; and that is by other people's standards, not just yours." She felt aggrieved; she had given Merlin far too much leeway.

"OK, you will be back to double-G in a minute; here is a little black dress. You will need to have your makeup done. With your

permission, I will save you some time.” Merlin looked at Samantha for consent. Samantha smiled with a slight flutter of the eyebrows.

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[The Star...Wed 6th Jan 2010. 10.30pm.](#)

They arrived at the club at 10.30 and went backstage to check the equipment.

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[The Star...Wed 6th Jan 2010. 11pm.](#)

At 11pm Merlin, Fey and Samantha stepped onto the stage. The curtains were drawn back behind them.

“Ladies and Gentleman. These are my assistants Fey and Eve. I am looking for a male volunteer. Someone who fancies being sawn in half. Come on wives, have a laugh, push your husband forward.”

Samantha was startled. That was new for Merlin. He was usually against bullying. Or was he? Hadn't she just been bullied with the milking machine? No! Merlin had been outrageous, but he did ask for permission, and some of the fantasy was her own. She had been teased by technology, and she had been entranced by her own body. Was he guilty by pushing the button? Or was she culpable for not stopping it?

Teddy stepped forward and shook Merlin's hand.

“Ladies and gentlemen, please give a warm welcome to Adam.”

Merlin had two boxes on the stage, he led Teddy towards the first box. The lid of the box was hinged on one side, split into four sections. Teddy stepped into the box. Fey helped Merlin to close the middle two doors leaving Teddy's head and feet visible to the audience.

“Eve. Please step into the second box.” Samantha was guided into the second box. She looked into Merlin's eyes for assurance, but he quickly disappeared. Samantha had to look at a screen above the bar to see what he was doing.

“Ladies and gentlemen. I am now going to cut my volunteers in half.” He promptly picked up a blade that was a large sheet of steel

with a wooden handle along one edge. He went over to Samantha's box and pushed it into the side of the box. Samantha felt the blade touch her waist.

"Are you ready Eve?"

"No! ...." Samantha's voice froze as the blade passed through her body. It felt like an electric shock hit her.

"Are you still with me Eve?"

"I seem to be ...." And Merlin did it again. He inserted the second blade below the first blade but from the other side. The electric shock passed back through Samantha, the other way.

Samantha closed her eyes for a few seconds.

"Are you OK?"

"Yes, but I don't understand how."

"Well open your eyes and look at the screen." Samantha did and nearly fainted. The box was in two halves. The top half was mounted on a frame that held it in a fixed position; the bottom half was mounted on a mobile frame, and Merlin had already moved it to one side.

There was loud applause from the audience.

"How are you, Adam?"

"Yes, OK. I can feel that blade against my waist and ...aaaayeee" Adam screamed like a banshee.

"OK, Adam?" Merlin asked.

"I guess so. I ...."

Merlin had quickly entered the second blade into Teddy's box and pulled the bottom half to one side.

Before Samantha and Teddy could mentally catch up with proceedings, Merlin had swapped their lower halves. He had connected Teddy's lower half to Samantha's torso and removed the blades. He opened Samantha's box.

'I must be a complete idiot.' Samantha thought.

"Come on. Out you come. Walk around and get a feel for those legs."

Merlin grabbed Samantha by the arm and pulled her out of the box. Samantha felt strange. First off, she wasn't used to wearing jeans. She stepped out to a round of applause.

"Don't these people realise how impossible this is." She asked.

Merlin clicked his mike off.

"You should be asking yourself 'How is this possible?'" Merlin chided. "And you should realise the audience cannot see what you can feel. They don't know what you have in those jeans. The audience will assume that it's just a clever change of clothes." Merlin clicked his mike back on.

Samantha followed Merlin over to Teddy's box. Merlin had connected Teddy's torso to Samantha lower half and removed the blades from the box. Teddy gasped as he stepped out; he was struggling to control Samantha's long legs on high heels.

"How are you feeling Adam?"

"Not good." He looked agitated.

"I promise to put you back shortly. Now, please, put a smile on your face."

"I need the toilet," Teddy screamed and headed to the gents. Samantha knew how he felt as she had the same thought only moments earlier.

Merlin clicked his mike off again and whispered in Samantha's ear.

"Now you have a problem. You must go after him and protect him. There is a strong risk he could be raped. You could be pregnant after the change back."

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[The toilets, backstage at the Star...Wed 6th Jan 2010. 11.30pm.](#)

Samantha followed Teddy; she also felt a need to pee. She headed for the nearest cubicle; it was already occupied. She went into the next cubicle, wrestled with her belt, pulled down jeans and pants, and sat down.

"What on Earth?" Samantha hissed.

“Just relax and let go.”

“Teddy?”

“Yes. I am in the first cubicle.”

“Oh good, you’re safe.” Samantha was relieved that she had found Teddy. “Don’t forget to wipe yourself Front to back,” Samantha shouted to Teddy.

“Ok. Don’t panic.”

Samantha stepped out and grabbed Teddy; she dragged him out of the ‘Gents’ and into the ‘Ladies’.

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[The toilets, backstage at the Star...Wed 6th Jan 2010. 11.35pm.](#)

“This is where you should be. You should be safe in here.” Samantha said.

“From whom?”

“Merlin for one.” He won’t come in here. “But I really meant any male.” Teddy put his hands on Samantha’s shoulders as he rested his bottom against the vanity unit.

“Err. Samantha. You’re forgetting one thing.”

“And what is that?”

“Below your waist, you are male.”

“Oh, why did you have to mention that?” Samantha screamed.

Her mind took off at a sprint:

‘Is there enough testosterone in a female body to drive this thing?’

Samantha’s thoughts died as she felt the blood rush from her head. Her right hand brushed against her bulging erection. Despite her body responding to purely instinctual urges; a small part of her mind was refusing.

“I feel the urge to fuck you, but I can’t.”

Samantha saw the irony – She could do the deed, and she would end up paying the price.

Teddy stood up and put his arms around Samantha who was caught off balance. Teddy whirled them around, and he pushed

Samantha back against the vanity unit. Samantha was trapped with a rampant cock draining her brain. Samantha began to shake. This thing was about to go off.

Teddy slipped the catch on Samantha's bra and released her breasts; his mind was locked on his obsession. He was totally oblivious to the risk of penetration.

Samantha experienced conflicting signals between the trembling in her chest and a pressure, fit to burst, in her jeans.

"Enough," Samantha screamed. Teddy dropped the nipple leaving Samantha hanging. Samantha pushed Teddy away; she tidied her bra and blouse. "We cannot hide in here." She dragged him out of the door.

\*\*\*

[The toilets, backstage at the Star...Wed 6th Jan 2010. 11.45pm.](#)

"Teddy. Are you OK?" Samantha asked.

"I don't know. You seem to be taking this very well. I am a little scared."

"Why?"

"Can we trust Merlin? We are his toys."

"Are you ready to play?"

"Sure. I have already been seduced!"

They stood at the bar for nearly an hour and suffered groping by the audience. It was well past midnight when Merlin swapped them back.

"Teddy. Do you want to join us?" Merlin's invitation surprised Teddy.

"Maybe another time. I would like to be Samantha's close friend."

"I am sure Samantha will be very glad of your company. You will need to keep fit. She has an insatiable sexual appetite."

Teddy blushed as he turned and left.

\*\*\*

[Samantha's room at the Barn...Thu 7th Jan 2010. 1am.](#)

Samantha and Merlin returned to Samantha's room at the Barn. A strong desire was building within Samantha; she yearned for Merlin. She could blame the alcohol but, in truth, it was only killing her inhibitions.

"Merlin. Can I get pregnant?"

"Yes. Do you want to?"

"No. Not yet. Can you make sure that I don't?"

"Yes. I promise that you will be safe in all things I do."

"Thanks, Merlin. I feel better for that. How was the pregnancy trick done?"

"I don't go on tour until Sunday. Do you want to do it?"

"Yes." There was her mouth again.

Samantha began to sway and removed her dress in a graceful tease. Feeling the sensual touch of the silk demibra that gave her very little support, she offered her breasts to Merlin and then withdrew. With her back to him, her panties dropped to the floor. She reached behind and released her bra; with a flounce of her butt and a wiggle of her hips, jerky inexperience became a sultry sway. She turned slowly and tried to visualise the movements of an exotic dancer. Her arousal was pushing her to move faster. Teasing was not natural to her, and she had a growing urge to pull Merlin towards her. She pulled back the bed sheets and sat up against the pillows.

"Have you ever thought about the Greek God Pan?" Merlin asked as he removed his jacket and shirt. "He was half man and half goat."

Samantha squirmed at the idea. "I think half-wolf would be better." Samantha kept running her mouth "I like the idea of you knotted, inside me, so you can't get away."

Merlin walked to the right side of Samantha's bed. Samantha caressed the bulge in his pants; her long fingers struggled to surround it. She leaned back on the pillows.

“OK lover. Make my night.” Samantha smiled and stretched an arm towards Merlin; she was on fire. Merlin took her body to heaven and back.

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[Samantha's room at the Barn...Thu 7th Jan 2010. 1am.](#)

As Samantha bathed in the afterglow, she opened her eyes.

“Apart from the obvious, Merlin. What just happened?”

“Oh, Samantha. Sex is a powerful force in magic. It benefits both of us.”

“How so?”

“Your body carries its own magic, and you could use it if you knew how.”

“Will you teach me?”

## CHAPTER 30

[The Star...Sat 10thApr 2010, 11pm](#)

Just before 11pm at the Star, Samantha settled herself into a chair near the stage. Merlin was about to start. The stage curtains were closed.

“Ladies and gentlemen. This is my last illusion for this season. I am going to take a break to design some new illusions. This illusion has never been seen before. I call it ‘Double Passover’. I need 3 assistants for this illusion. Fey and Jacquie are already here. Samantha, would you join us?”

Samantha’s arrival on stage was designed to lift the excitement.

“And now ladies and gentlemen, Samantha and I will put these collars on Fey and Jacquie. Each collar is connected to a long extendable dog lead.”

Samantha felt a strange shiver run down her spine as she put a collar around Fey’s neck. She connected the lead to the collar and suggestively pulled Fey across the stage.

“Let me introduce you to the pass-over gate,” Merlin announced.

The curtains opened on the main theatre to reveal a huge oval ornate frame that looked like a liquid mirror. The structure was on wheels. Merlin turned it around several times and then left the frame sideways on to the audience.

Fey and Jacquie put their right hands on their collars and began to extend the leads as they walked to the right of the stage.

Merlin and Samantha moved to the left of the stage. The handles were passed through the liquid mirror as Samantha and Merlin walked around the gate.

“Fey, Jacquie you will now run towards the gate and jump through it. Samantha and I will draw in the leads.”

As Fey and Jacquie jumped through the gate, Fey became a snow leopard, and Jacquie became a black panther. Samantha

clenched her bowels and nearly messed her knickers. There was an immediate hush around the room.

Samantha and Merlin held their charges as if they were wild and needed to be restrained. Samantha felt like the collar should be on her neck; she was the one who wanted to run. The spotlights were dimmed to a moonlight setting. Samantha walked with Fey, the snow leopard, around the stage. Samantha was watching Fey attentively.

*'What is it with this girl? Even as a leopard, her thighs stretch and sway with sex appeal. That tail is hypnotic. She is teasing me.'*

The audience was muted. Nobody wanted to frighten the animals. Everyone assumed that it was a substitution illusion and that these animals were indeed wild.

*'Fey. Can you hear me?'*

*'Oh yes. Purr. This is amazing. Purr. Purr. The pheromones from my tail would draw you towards me. Purr. I could sway my tail to train your eyes. Purr. You would be mine. Purr.'* Fey's purring could be heard like a distant drum roll.

*'Oh Fey. My mind is in control, but my body is reacting to your seduction. I am already horny.'*

"Ladies and gentlemen. We will run towards the gate, and the animals will jump through."

Samantha and Merlin began the run towards the gate; the animals took off and leapt through the gate in the reverse direction. As they passed through the gate, Jacquie and Fey reappeared.

Fey walked back to Samantha and removed the collar from her neck. Fey took the lead from Samantha's hand and put the collar around Samantha's neck.

Samantha looked across to Merlin. Imagine her surprise to see Jacquie had also removed her collar and put it around Merlin's neck. Jacquie took the lead from Merlin. Merlin looked across at Samantha and smiled; Samantha nearly shit herself. Fey and Jacquie walked to the far end of the stage. Fey took over the show.

"Ladies, and gentleman, Merlin and Samantha will run towards the gate and jump through." Merlin and Samantha complied with the instruction and appeared as a pair of white tigers. There was a total hush in the house. They looked far too powerful to be controlled by their handlers.

*'Merlin. Is this illusion?'*

Samantha was feeling very strange.

*'You feel strange because your body has adjusted to hold the animal shape. The rest is a glamour spell. Angel is safe. We must change back quickly before the audience fascination turns to fear.'*

Samantha and Merlin turned around and ran back towards the gate. The rush as they jumped through the gate was exhilarating. Fey hammed it up and made a great show of leading Samantha off the stage with the collar still attached. Fey detached the lead but left the collar on Samantha's neck.

"Keep the collar on for a while. I know you don't like bondage, but it will excite Merlin. Besides, it looks good on you. It's such a bizarre contrast to your beautiful dress and an elegant neck that it is amazing."

Merlin stepped back into the spotlight. "Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. That concludes our show for tonight."

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### The Star...Sun 11th Apr 2010, 9pm

On Sunday night, Samantha took Merlin to see the surveillance techniques she had used to track the drug pushers. Merlin was impressed, but, again, Samantha was scolded for pursuing the pushers.

“Look, Merlin, I have had enough of this. I have more than enough protection – Astrid, Arturus, Angel, Carrie and Ghost. I am stronger than a normal man, never mind a woman. There is no reason why I should have anything to fear. All the video surveillance was kept for the police. What the hell have I done wrong?” Samantha was steaming.

“You are pregnant. You mustn’t take risks.”

“Ah phooey! I take risks regularly to fix the addicts. Every time I deal with a victim, I keep thinking that I should be tackling the source of the problem.”

“Samantha. You cannot get rid of the drugs problem. Drugs have been peddled into this country for more than 2,000 years. You get rid of one lot of pushers, and they are soon replaced by another.”

“What the fucking hell are you suggesting? That I give up chasing the drug pushers? I have given you some of the greatest surveillance methods ever, and you are still suggesting that I give up! You are fucking crazy. Someone has to deal with the pushers!”

Samantha was screaming at Merlin. She burst into tears and ran out of the Star.

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### The Black Cat...Sun 11th Apr 2010, 10.30pm

Samantha got back to the ‘Black Cat’ in double-quick time, having run hysterically all the way home. She sat down on her sofa sobbing her heart out. In a fit of despair, she grabbed her mobile phone and called her mother.

“Mum. It’s Samantha.”

“What? You don’t sound like Samantha!”

“Mum I need you. I am Samantha! Your daughter!”

“You don’t sound like Samantha! I don’t know you! I don’t know you!”

There was an ominous ‘click’ as her mum rang off; followed by the monotonous nagging of the dial tone, that eventually stopped when Samantha failed to hang up. Samantha screamed her anguish and collapsed.

\*\*\*

[The Star...Sun 11th Apr 2010, 11pm](#)

The phone call to Samantha’s mother had ended with an ‘ominous click’, the thunder of rejection rumbled on. Samantha needed her mother. Samantha had expected her mother to respond – she didn’t!

It was her own fault. She hadn’t told her mum about her relationship with Merlin. Her mother hadn’t recognised her. Samantha thought her voice was the same. Why did her mother fail to recognise her? Another flood of tears strangled Samantha’s brain.

## CHAPTER 31

### The Black Cat...Mon 12th Apr 2010, Midday

Samantha awoke at midday feeling broken and lost. She had walked from one ocean of tears to another. She had been crying for most of the night. Mercifully, Astrid put Samantha to sleep. Astrid had also killed off the bad 'heart-break' hormones giving Samantha a better chance of recovery.

Samantha felt awful. Conscious thought was beginning to surface. She was frightened that she had just blown it with Merlin. She phoned her sister Jo.

"Jo. I think I have just blown my relationship with Merlin. I stood my ground on handling the drug pushers. I lost my temper big style. I would do it again. What hurts most is, I am now sure I am in love with him." Samantha burst into tears again, and Jo wisely waited for Samantha to get a grip on herself.

"Jo. I phoned mum. She hung up on me."

Samantha's tears broke again, and she abruptly ended the call.

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### The Black Cat...Mon 12th Apr 2010, 1pm

Samantha rang Jo a little later to say sorry. Jo spent her lunchbreak trying to calm Samantha down.

Letting out this level of emotion took a lot out of Samantha. It was raw emotion, and her understanding was disconnected. Without the sterling work of Astrid and Arturus repairing the damage behind the scenes, Samantha would have sunk into deep depression.

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### The Black Cat...Mon 12th Apr 2010, 7pm

On Monday night, Julie and Jessica came up to 'the Black Cat'. They were just settling into their new life in Samantha's family. Samantha's mood lifted a little. There was always someone worse off.

Samantha did her best to hide her feelings as the young ladies explained their problems. Their lives in the Children's Home had been sheer hell. Julie and Jessica were now 18, and on a gap-year, trying to earn money for their college funds. They were emotionally scarred. Julie was introverted, depressed and reserved, while Jessica was sharp, bitchy and yet very discerning. Jessica was accurate with her analysis of her harsh life. The ladies had been struggling without a father and mother. The house father and mother at the Orphanage had no interest in the children; they were only in it for the money. Samantha's mind snapped back to reality. She drew the ladies into a cuddle on the sofa. She was happy to become their mother.

*'Astrid, Arturus. How are the ladies coping?'*

*'Samantha. You can find out for yourself. Set up 2 telepathy listeners. Connect 1 to each of the girls and listen to their thoughts and emotions. Treat them as you would treat yourself in deep hypnosis - observe, monitor and understand without feeling or reacting to what you see. Your body is already reacting, at a purely instinctive level, to their needs for a mother. Do not be surprised if they start to suckle from you. No words are necessary. They have just lost huge amounts of stress, fear and tension. Last night was their first night of deep sleep for months. Their bodies, minds and hormones were effectively in suspended animation since the Orphanage closed. With your nurturing, they will soon recover.'*

Samantha let out a deep sigh.

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[The Black Cat...Tue 13th Apr 2010, 8am](#)

Samantha hadn't slept much when the noise began downstairs. She knew the sewing stations were due for delivery but hadn't expected such a din. It sounded like they were digging the floor up. She would have to get up and see what's up. She went for a shower.

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[The Black Cat...Tue 13th Apr 2010, 8.15am](#)

Just as Samantha was ready to go out, Merlin came in with a big bunch of flowers. A simple card said 'SORRY'.

The bouquet was a mix of red roses and white carnations; a small spray of 'gipsy' split the display giving it some balance between the white 'innocence' and the blood red 'passion'.

"Samantha. I am deeply sorry for being a prat. I can see no fault in any of your arguments. Your reasoning is sound, and those surveillance techniques are brilliant. I am sorry that I was smothering you. Can we start again?"

Samantha's mood improved to a gentle sulk. Samantha looked up at Merlin with an air of conciliation.

"Only, if you give me room to breathe. I must be able to deal with some things myself. I can't work with my hands tied behind my back."

"PAX. You have made your point. I agree."

Samantha wanted to remind Merlin of the demands she was facing.

"Will you join me on a ward round at drug rehab?"

"Yes. I haven't been in there for a long time." Samantha felt deflated. It was a hollow victory. Of course, Merlin had been there before.

Samantha grabbed a large heavy lead crystal vase from the kitchen windowsill; just a few moments ago, she would have thrown it at Merlin. She filled the vase with water and placed it on the kitchen table. She cut the wrapping away from the flowers and dropped them unceremoniously into the vase. The abandoned

arrangement still looked perfect. Flowers always did things to Samantha. She had a keen nose and loved the scent of fresh cut blooms. The smell was intoxicating and rapidly lifted her depression. Samantha hugged Merlin and pouted for a forgiving kiss.

\*\*\*

[The Black Cat...Tue 13th Apr 2010, 6pm](#)

It was early evening when Samantha's phone rang. "Hello, Samantha. It's your mother, Sally."

"Hi, mum. It's good to hear your voice. I was so upset when you hung up."

"You were screaming. The phone line is bad enough anyway. I couldn't talk to you in that state."

"Merlin came to me this morning. He brought me a bouquet of flowers with a card that said 'SORRY'."

"Oh good. That is very good. So, tell me all about it."

Samantha gave her mum an edited version of the first week. How she became Merlin's assistant for 3 nights. Samantha didn't tell her mum about Merlin's little joke or that she was pregnant. Samantha didn't even tell her mum that she was in love with Merlin; she guessed she didn't need to. Her mother said they would come and visit as soon as they could.

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[ZED somewhere in the UK...Wed 14th Apr 2010](#)

ZED knew he must tread carefully. He suspected that 'Subject tested positive' referred to Samantha. He saw her as his potential asset. ZED needed to get Samantha beneath his ring so that he could scan her; preferably without her knowing. He had flown into London, Heathrow, a week earlier, and hired a car to travel to Milton.

ZED arrived at MURPHY with the office workers and was parked up near the Admin Block. On Monday and Tuesday, ZED had abducted one of the cleaning staff. He had read their security and work memories, and then put them to sleep in the back of the cleaning van. ZED used his shapeshifting ability to become a copy of

that person and borrowed their security pass. He could now follow Samantha, to wherever.

ZED had arranged his schedule so that he would be outside Drug Rehab at 10am. He had set up his cleaning station and started cleaning the visiting area. Samantha entered reception accompanied by Kim pushing a trolley laden with cartons of milk. ZED watched them enter the main ward; he took a few moments to review his plan. Whatever he did must look non-threatening otherwise he would trigger Merlin's protection wards.

As soon as the nurses' station was clear, ZED put the security cameras in a loop. He morphed his ring, so it surrounded the ward door frame. Samantha will be scanned when she leaves the ward. ZED retreated to a safe distance and reactivated the security cameras.

Two hours later, ZED returned with his cleaning station; he had predicted that Samantha would leave shortly.

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[ZED, in Reception, Drug Rehab...Wed 14th Apr 2010, 1pm](#)

Samantha left the ward at 1pm, as she passed through ZED's ring, Merlin's protection ward was triggered. A portal opened next to Samantha and Merlin came through it. Merlin pulled Samantha to one side and away from the door. He tapped her medallion; Samantha was immediately surrounded by a protective dome that looked like a fountain of water. The dome glistened from the red of Samantha's hair.

Meanwhile, ZED had hit the fire alarm with his elbow. He grabbed his cleaning trolley and pushed it towards the ward door. He retrieved his ring while Merlin had his back to the door and was fussing over Samantha. ZED strolled away. Merlin looked around the room. He saw the nursing station and the two nurses. He looked, but he didn't see. No one notices the cleaners.

\*\*\*

[ZED, in Reception, Drug Rehab...Wed 14th Apr 2010, 1.05pm](#)

ZED headed for the nearest fire exit. He went back to the van and released the cleaner. He updated the cleaner's memories with where he had been. When the fire alarm 'all clear' is rung, the cleaner will go back to his cleaning station to complete his normal day.

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## ADDENDUM

## THE PYTHIAN GAMES

Information: courtesy Wikipedia.

The Pythian Games (Delphic Games) were one of the four Panhellenic Games of Ancient Greece, a forerunner of the modern Olympic Games, held every four years at the sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi. They were held in honour of Apollo two years after (and two years before) each Olympic Games, and between each Nemean and Isthmian Games. They were founded sometime in the 6th century BCE, and, unlike the Olympic Games, also featured competitions for art and dance. The art and dance competitions pre-dated the athletic portion of the games and were said to have been started by Apollo after he killed Python and set up the oracle at Delphi. Otherwise, the athletic events were the same as the Olympic Games. A four-horse chariot race was held in a hippodrome in the plain, not far from the sea, in the place where the original stadium was sited. - According to Ovid, in the formative years of growth after the deluge, mother earth accidentally produced a gigantic Python that terrorised the humans. Apollo successfully killed it, though it required almost every arrow from his quiver. To ensure that no one forgot about this heroic deed, he created the Pythian game to commemorate his victory. - The winners received a wreath of bay laurel, sacred to Apollo, from the city of Tempe, in Thessaly. Smaller versions of the Pythian Games were celebrated in many other cities of the Levant and Greece.

## STORY LOCATIONS

The UK story locations are broadly speaking real.

Littleton – is in North Cheshire, East of Chester.

Milton – is an old village, Wolverton, next to Milton Keynes. – but there is no resemblance in the layout.

The Old Arcade – Loosely based on ‘the Passage’ in the Georgian City of Bath. This can be found off the High Street. – It is a delightful shopping area, often missed by tourists.

## EDITIONS

Edition 2, Release date: 21-Dec-2018. Typing errors. Edited by Grammarly using language = English (British).

Edition 3, Release date: 25-Jan-2019. Author discarded penname and reverted to real name.

Edition 4, Added scene data to aid Audible synchronisation.