

Isolation Escapism

Chapter 5

"There's something intimate about being hypnotised," I said softly. "Opening yourself, your mind, up to someone else. Allowing them to have that kind of access to you. Giving them that much trust. It's not something you'd do with just anyone."

Mom and Kaley took the words in. Sitting limp on the sofa next to one another, eyes closed.

"It's an intimate thing. A type of bonding that most people will never experience. For a few minutes, while you're in a trance, I'm connected to you in a way that no-one else ever could be."

That was perhaps pushing it a little. Didn't want either of them to get too uncomfortable with all the talk of 'intimacy' and all that. But, for my plans to work, some changes needed to be made. And change came with a cost. A risk.

"The more we do this," I continued. "The more I hypnotise you, the more intimate these sessions feel. Not romantically or sexually intimate. More like... the kind of intimacy and privacy one would expect from their doctor. There's a trust, an understanding that I'll do what I can to help you and you'll do what you can to allow me. In a way, right now, I'm less a member of the family and more of a therapist. Gently guiding you, helping you remove that piled-up stress."

Yes. *That* was the angle I should approach this from.

"When it comes to hypnosis," I said, "think of me the same way you'd think of a doctor. Think of these sessions as a medical check-up. Only one for your minds."

Neither of the women seemed to have any problem with that. No frowns or hints of discomfort. So I went on.

"When you go for a medical check-up, you're expected to put yourself in compromising situations – exposing yourself and your body in ways that would normally never happen. But, there's nothing wrong with it. It's embarrassing, maybe. But it's not *bad*. At the end of the day, it's to help you. It's a *good* thing."

I took a deep breath, focused on the goal of this trance.

"The only *truly* uncomfortable part is when there's someone else there to witness it. When you go for a medical check-up, you don't want your daughter or mother to be there watching. That'd make it a million times more embarrassing. More awkward. You do it alone, just you and the professional. No onlookers or witnesses. Just two people. The subject, and their guide."

And there it was. The hook.

I had two plans. One for each of the women. A way to seduce Kaley and a way to bed Mom. Two different plans.

Only problem was, I couldn't exactly use shared hypnosis sessions to push forward both plans at the same time. Driving Mom to the edge of her inhibitions while Kaley sat right next to her soaking all those words in herself? There was no way that *wouldn't* lead to problems down the line. Likewise, my prom plan for Kaley, all the work I'd need to do to make it work – I couldn't do it with Mom's ears there listening in either.

I needed separate trances.

One trance for Kaley, another for Mom.

And I needed to make it so *they* were the ones asking for and demanding it, lest I cast suspicion on myself by bringing it up.

"Hypnosis, like a medical exam, is intimate. If anything, it's even *more* intimate. It's not your body being exposed, after all. It's your *mind*. Do you *really* want someone else there to listen in on what you and your hypnotist talk about? Do you *really* want someone snooping in on such a private, intimate process?"

The very same moment I tapped 'confirm' on the order, someone tapped on my bedroom door.

"Yes?" I called, setting my phone down.

The door creaked open, Kaley's blonde head appearing in the crack. She smiled and, for a second, I was too stunned by how pretty she was to react.

"Hey," Kaley said, "can I come in?"

"Uh... Sure."

"Great!"

The door swung wide open and in hopped Kaley, wearing a plain white dress that bulged out beautifully over her chest. She shut the door behind herself, skipped over to where I was laying on my bed and sat down near my feet.

It was agony trying to not look at her body, her bare legs or the brief hint of side-boob I could half see through the arm-hole of her sleeveless dress. She was wearing a bra, that was obvious, but still. Keeping my eyes on her face while she looked over at me was torture.

"What's up?"

"I've been thinking," my sister said, a faint pinkness creeping into her cheeks. "Would it be okay if you did your hypnotism thing on me and Mom separately? Like, instead of doing us both at the same time, you do her first and then me."

Somehow, I managed to keep from smiling.

"I... I suppose," I said, keeping my face neutral. "I mean, I *could* do that. It'd mean things'll take longer to set up, and I'll have to..." I frowned, made it look like I was unhappy with the idea. "Why do you want me to hypnotise you separately?"

Blushing, Kaley gave the reasons I'd planted in her mind.

It was 'awkward' for her, she didn't like the idea of Mom being there while I hypnotised her. She felt 'uncomfortable' about the prospect of Mom listening in.

"I'll do it," I sighed after she was done explaining it to me.

"Thanks Michael!"

"But," I added quickly, "I'm going to need to hypnotise you earlier in the day from now on. If I'm going to have to hypnotise you two separately, I'm gonna need more time to do it in."

"Sure," Kaley shrugged, smiling. "That's fine."

"In that case," I said. "Why don't we get down to right away? We're both done with school stuff and I've got nothing better to do right now. What do you say?"

"I want you to picture a guy," I spoke softly, eyeing my sister's motionless body. Eyes shut, laying on my bed. She could almost have been asleep. "Nobody you've ever seen or met before. A totally new person. A guy that only exists in your mind."

Part one of my plan for Kaley: Create a 'boyfriend' for her.

"He's handsome," I told her. "Attractive. The kind of guy you'd look at and instantly start crushing on. A cute smile, a nice body, a laugh that makes your insides tingle."

I towered over her, standing beside the bed. Heart thumping.

"Do you have a picture of him in your mind, Kaley?" I asked.

"Yes," my sister breathed.

"Keep it there," I told her. "Keep picturing him. I'm going to ask you some questions about this man of yours. Easy, simple questions. The kind you don't need to ponder. When I ask them, I want you to answer without thinking. Can you do that for me, Kaley?"

"Yes," she repeated.

Good. Good... Now, to start of small.

"What colour hair does he have?"

"Brown," Kaley answered instantly.

"Light brown or dark brown or is it in between?"

"Dark brown," Kaley mumbled.

"Is it cut short, or on the longer side?"

"Short."

Her eyebrows narrowed a little at that last question.

I noted it, remained quiet for a few moments.

Short, dark hair. Brunette.

Okay...

I pictured it, a faceless human. No nose or eyes, an indistinct jaw, no ears or body. Just a blank slate with short, dark brown hair.

A lot of blanks to fill in.

"Does he have any facial hair?" I asked, crouching down beside the bed and making myself as comfortable as I could.

"No," Kaley answered.

"And what colour are his irises?"

My sister gave her answer – green – and I moved on to the next question, and then the one after that. Over the course of many minutes, I constructed the image – put the pieces together. A tall, strong – but not *too* muscular – man with a chiselled jaw and a cocky smirk.

That, apparently, was my sister's type.

"His name," I said, feeling a smile tugging at my lips, "is Chad. And he's the guy who's going to take you to prom."

Kaley gave no response or reaction to my words.

"A few weeks from now," I carried on, "you're going to have a prom. A memory that you're missing, one that you wish you had. We're going to make it happen for you. And *Chad* is going to be your date. The most perfect guy you can imagine."

When the time came, I'd take the place of 'Chad'. My sister would see her ideal guy, but I'd be the one holding her hips as we danced and I'd be the one taking her to bed after the 'prom' ended.

"For the next few weeks, I want you to set all the guys in your life aside. All the people you message and talk to every day. If we're going to make this prom night real for you, you have to be willing to *believe* it. And, for that, you need to act like it's actually happening. Not just in trances or the hypnotic illusions, but all the time. For the next few weeks, Chad is going to be your boyfriend. The guy you love with all your heart. Your one and only. Your date to prom."

Kaley's lips pursed. Eyebrows knitting together in a frown.

I had no idea if she was seeing anyone, or if she was interested in anyone. The whole lockdown situation, her being trapped at home for the last few months, probably hadn't made a relationship easy. But she *could* have a real boyfriend – in which case, her mind wouldn't be thrilled about my idea.

"You only get one chance at prom," I added softly. "This is it. Your one and *only* opportunity to create these happy memories. People remember their prom night for the rest of their lives. It's one of the most important events in a girl's life."

There was internal conflict. A blind man could see that. Kaley's mind warring with itself; the idea of having a prom against whatever relationship was preventing her from accepting 'Chad'.

"And, once prom is over, once you have those memories, you can go back to how things used to be. Everything can go back to normal. You *do* want to have a prom, don't you Kaley?"

"Yes," my sister whispered, face slowly relaxing.

The moment the doorbell rang, I shot downstairs.

Kaley was in her bedroom, Mom in her office. Neither one of them would - *could* -

answer the door, so it was all on me.

Usually, that was a burden. Me having to be the one to always set aside whatever I was doing to answer the door. An annoyance, but one I had to put up with thanks to Mom's and Kaley's status as immunocompromised. Usually, it was a pain in the ass. But not today.

I bolted to the front door, unlocked it.

The delivery guy had already moved on, was walking back to his van. And, right there in the doorway, was a small cardboard box.

I snatched it up off the ground, slammed the door shut and ran back to my bedroom. As I kicked my bedroom door shut behind myself, I began tearing away at the brown cardboard box.

Inside it was another box. Only this one was white, had a picture of its contents on the front.

A new phone.

In minutes, I had the thing set up and ready to go – set to silent on all fronts. I jotted down the phone number, made a mental note to download some specific apps for it later. Then, grinning like a moron, I set the new phone down and returned to my school work.

My main phone – the, as of today, older one – buzzed to let me know my package had been delivered.

"You haven't known Chad for long," I said, eyes roaming my sister's body as I spoke. She was wearing the same white dress as yesterday. "A few days, really. But, the moment you started talking to him, you knew he was different. There's just something about him. Something you can't put your finger on."

It was a summer dress. Armless, tight up top and loose down below, made of a thin fabric. If I stared hard enough, I could see the outline of her bra underneath it.

"Every time you talk to him, you feel like a teenager again. All blushy and shy and awkward. He makes you feel giddy and excited. And, though he's practically an Adonis, it's not just his looks that make you feel the way you do."

I was going too strong. Needed to calm myself down. Being too eager would lead to mistakes, which in turn would lead to disasters.

My eyes were stuck on Kaley's chest. Those big, bouncy tits.

Part of me wanted to reach out and touch them. More than *part*, really. *All* of me wanted to grope her.

Focus.

"Have you ever felt *fate*?" I asked, dragging my eyes away from Kaley's chest only for them to wander along her bare legs. "Has there ever been a moment in your life that you felt you were destined to be there, like you belonged in that place and time?"

"No," Kaley answered.

Worth a try.

"There's a feeling parents get when they see their children for the first time," I told her. "An overwhelming sense of joy and purpose. Like a hole inside them that they'd never known was there has suddenly been filled. Do you ever feel like there's a hole in you, Kaley? Do you ever feel like there's something missing in your life?"

"Yes," my sister answered.

"That's Chad," I said. "He is the thing that's been missing from your life. He's the one who fills that hole, replaces it with joy and love and purpose. He is your destiny."

Way overboard. I was going far further than I'd planned to with this trance. But, as I crouched down at the foot of my bed, stared up my sister's dress skirt, I found myself unable to care. I was doing this to help Kaley. To give her a memory she'd never have otherwise. Deep down, she must be as okay with what I was doing as I was. Otherwise, why would her subconscious allow it?

She wasn't resisting my words, therefore she *must* want it.

"Have you ever been so truly, madly in love with someone that you can't imagine life without them? That you want to be with them forever, and that any moment you spend without them there is pain..."

"Yes," Kaley mumbled quietly.

"That's Chad," I stated. "That's what he is to you."

I forced myself to stand up, to walk around my bed so I was closer to my sister's face. My hand slid into my pocket, pulled out a written note with a phone number on it.

"I have a phone number I want you to remember," I told her, eyes scanning her dress for pockets. "It's Chad's phone number. The man you love's number. Your only way of talking to him through the lockdown. If you forget it, you lose the love of your life. You *have* to remember it. That's why you wrote it down. So you'd never forget it."

Why the hell didn't her dress have pockets?!

That was the plan! Slip the note in her pocket, have her add it after the trance was over – message her as 'Chad' and make the fake relationship feel more real to her.

Why didn't she have any fucking pockets?!

"You always keep the note – the number – close," I said, thinking fast. "It's so important to you, you always want it nearby. As close to your heart as you can."

Gulping, I folded the note up, eyes on my sister's bust once more.

"It's a reminder. Whenever you feel it there, next to your skin, you're reminded of Chad. Your boyfriend."

Slowly, carefully, I moved the node – slid it under Kaley's dress, between her breasts. Her face twitched a little, lips curling down. But, thankfully, she didn't break the trance.

"The very first thing you're going to do when I wake you up," I sighed in relief, pulling my hand away from Kaley's tits, "is check your phone. Make sure you add Chad as a contact..."

It took all of five minutes between Kaley leaving my room and my new phone receiving a message from an 'unknown number'.

I grinned, read the one-word message.

'Chad?'

Before replying, I gave the situation some thought.

My sister's mind would be confused right about now. Her thoughts would be torn between two versions of reality. Actual reality, and the reality I'd constructed for her.

Because of the way the human mind worked, she'd automatically try to fit the 'altered' reality into the 'real' one. But, where things didn't fit seamlessly, there would be confusion and uncertainty and the threat of her mind snapping out of the 'altered' mindset completely.

Sure, she was dating someone called Chad. Someone she'd met and started dating recently. Those two facts on their own were fine. But, begin digging – asking questions like 'how did she meet Chad?' and 'why wasn't he already a contact on her phone?' - and problems would begin to arise.

For now, I wasn't *too* worried.

Subconsciously, Kaley knew Chad wasn't real. I hadn't buried the lie so deep that even her subconscious mind would believe it fully. So, when she was faced with questions and inconsistencies, she would – on some level – know why and know not to worry too much about it. As far as her subconscious knew, 'Chad' was imaginary and would always stay that way. She had no idea what I was really planning.

As I took things further and deeper, I'd need to iron out any possible issues. Make Kaley – and her subconscious – fully believe that Chad was a real person; and the love of her life to boot. But, for now at least, it wasn't a *huge* concern.

The only issue was, how should I reply to her message?

Subconsciously, Kaley would know it was me on the other end of the conversation. I couldn't make it too sexual or naughty – yet – without making my sister uncomfortable.

But, at the same time, I needed her to fully believe and accept that 'Chad' was more than 'just a friend'.

In the end, I settled on something small and simple.

'Hi baby.'

It didn't take long for my sister to reply with a blushing emoji. And, from there, my sister's first ever chat with 'Chad' commenced.