

Fall To Temptation

Chapter 3

To say I looked far and wide for an answer would be to understate just how much research I did.

How do you hypnotise someone to say or do something they usually wouldn't do? How do you make them go against their natural instincts and get them to do something they specifically don't want to?

I'd been hoping for an easy, straight-forward answer.

Hypnotist shows made people act like chickens and ducks and dogs, humiliate themselves in front of an audience. Surely it couldn't be *that* hard to do, right?

Wrong.

So very, very wrong.

Hypnotist shows, it turns out, use peer pressure as a way of manipulating people. Everyone expects them to act like an idiot as soon as they're selected. To not do so – to not go along with the hypnotist's demands – would, in a way, cause an even more uncomfortable scene, even more embarrassment, than if they just complied to begin with. All those watching eyes? They served the hypnotist in coercing and exerting control over their subject.

Plucking secrets from a mind that didn't want to share them?

That was something else entirely.

I could have all the eyes in the world on Melody, pressuring her to spill her problems. But it wouldn't work. If anything, it'd just reinforce her desire to not speak. More witnesses meant more people knowing what she didn't want anyone to learn.

No. Finding out what was wrong with my sister wouldn't be so easy.

Compelling secrets from and forcing actions upon a hypnotised person was a difficult process. From everything I'd read - and I'd read a *lot* - it was far more reasonable and simple to just ask the person outside of a trance and hope they share – convince them with words, not manipulate them into telling you.

Except Melody had no interest in telling me what was wrong.

The deeper I searched, the muddier things got. Morally and ethically speaking, I was in a grey area. If not downright dark.

I found accounts of people wanting to trick their spouses into performing certain sexual acts. Other accounts of people wanting to trick their friends or acquaintances into sleeping with them. One person, I read, tried to use hypnosis to seduce their own daughter.

Learning about that made my face turn red, to say the least.

I didn't want *that*. I didn't! All I wanted was to help my struggling, hurting sister with her problems. I just wanted to be a good brother.

Ultimately, I didn't find my answer.

No easy-go-lucky way of tricking Melody into opening up to me.

But there *must* be a way.

There *had* to be.

With hypnosis, I had access to my sister's mind. Her brain. I had a doorway into her thoughts, her memories, her emotions, her very identity and personality. Surely, with that access, there had to be *some* way for me to influence her beyond what I'd already done.

No matter how much I tried, I couldn't find the answers I needed online. But that wouldn't stop me.

Practice. All I needed was practice and understanding.

I'd figure it out by myself, if I had to.

But, no matter what, I'd do it.

I'd get Melody to open up to me. I'd make her spill her secrets and tell me about her

problems.

I had to.

I stepped into the living room, rolling my eyes at the scene before me.

A soft pillow in the centre of the room, encircled by five little smoke trails. Burning incense wafted up from the five small holders Mom had set up, filling the room with the scent of lavender. On the pillow, in the most cliché meditation pose imaginable, was my mother. Eyes shut, humming softly.

She was wearing yoga pants and a plain t-shirt, breasts bulging outwards.

Had she heard me enter the room?

If so, she gave no indication.

I took a step towards her, then hesitated. A rush of thoughts flitted through my mind; doubts and questions and worries.

My heart thumped.

No. I had to do this. For Melody's sake. I had to convince Mom to let me hypnotise her. I had to learn more. In order to help my sister, I needed all the experience and knowledge I could get my hands on. Having Mom and Melody both to hypnotise would double the opportunities I'd have to learn.

I strode forward, came to a stop right in front of my mother.

"Yoga nidra," I stated loud and clear. "Is a form of spiritual meditation that relieves stress and anxiety, and helps an individual balance their energies and chakras. It's been used since ancient times, and is a cornerstone of true spiritual enlightenment."

She didn't react to my words, save to stop humming.

"Many experts believe that yoga nidra and hypnosis are one in the same. They both invoke a state of consciousness that lies between being awake and being asleep. And both require guidance to reach that semi-conscious state. I've done a lot of research and-"

"We've had this discussion already, Ben," Mom said, not moving an inch from her meditative pose.

"That was before I'd read up on it," I said, pushing down my nerves. "I can perform the induction, I know how. And I can help you achieve that spiritual enlightenment. But not for free."

Her eyes opened, snapped up to me.

Finally, I had her attention.

"I expect to be paid for my efforts," I continued. "Not anywhere near as much as a professional would charge you – not that there are any actual yoga nidra masters nearby anyway – but a reasonable price. Lets say..."

I pretended to think, though I'd already decided on a number before hand.

"Fifty dollars a session."

She raised an eyebrow.

"Up front."

It was a risky strategy.

Last time I asked, it'd been as a brother who wanted to help his sister – wanting to use Mom as a lab rat for my experimentation. No way was she *ever* going to agree to that. Mom was a firm believer in the 'everyone had to deal with their own shit' mentality. In her eyes, the only person who could get Melody out of her slump was Melody herself.

It'd been the wrong approach.

What I should have done – what I was doing now – was offer my mother a real benefit to allowing me hypnotise her. Enlightenment.

The demand for payment? That only made the deal more reasonable.

See, if I'd just straight up offered to do this for Mom the very day after asking her to let me hypnotise her, she'd have seen through it in a heartbeat. Mom wasn't a fool, despite her trust in nonsensical bullshit. By adding a fee to the equation, what I'd really done was

plant a story in my mother's head.

Brother hypnotises sister to help her. Finds out he has a talent for it. Turns his talent into a source of income by offering it to his mother at a price.

I wasn't a bleeding-heart moron sticking his nose where it didn't belong.

No, I was an *entrepreneur*.

I had a skill, my mother had money.

The only question was, would she buy it?

The silence in the room dragged on as my mother stared at me, considered my proposition.

A new spiritual experience? 'Enlightenment' for fifty dollars?

"Okay," she said at last, lips curling into an amused smirk, "I'll let you try it. Once. And it'll be for free. I'm not wasting money on something until I know it works. You get once chance, and that's your lot."

"You sure you don't wanna go out?" I asked, eyes flicking to Melody.

She shook her head, frowned.

"Floppy pancakes," I said quickly, before her mood had a chance to sour further.

Her faltering smile widened.

"I'd rather stay in today," Melody hummed. "Maybe watch you play more video games again."

The idea of going outdoors made her uncomfortable. I made a mental note of the fact, pushed down the string of questions which followed it. I could think about all *that* later.

We were in my room. Me at my computer, her sitting on my bed.

Melody was wearing a heavy hoodie and baggy trousers, her hair messy and tangled. Beautiful, despite the obvious lack of care she'd put into her appearance. And smiling. A wide, pretty grin.

"How about," I said, spinning my desk chair to face her, "instead of games, we watch a movie together?"

"Sure," Melody shrugged.

Non-committal. Content to just sit there and let life happen. She'd watch me game on my own, might even join me for a little bit. And she'd be more than willing to watch some shitty movie or binge a new show with me. But there was no real *excitement*.

Bubbly Melody had always been so full of life and energy.

Even with her worries and issues boxed away in her mind, she was a far cry from the sister I used to have.

Bubbly Melody. Sad Melody. Content Melody.

My sister's three faces.

"You decide," I told her, pushing myself off my chair and diving onto the bed next to her.

"I don't know," she laughed. "I'm not exactly a movie buff or anything. I haven't watched anything since..."

Her eyebrows narrowed.

"Floppy pancakes," I sighed.

The smile returned to her lips.

"Maybe," Melody said, eyes drifting to my computer, "instead of you playing games, I could play them and *you* could watch."

"Works for me," I grinned. "What kind of game do you wanna play?"

As my sister lost herself in a mystical, fantasy kingdom, I sat back on my bed and watched.

I'd had to use her trigger phrase so many times already, and it was barely the afternoon. Forcing her to lock away her worries and pain, while a good way to get her out

of her slump, was by no means a long-term solution. With every use of the phrase, the programming was reinforced in Melody's subconscious mind. But it wasn't enough.

I could hardly be with my sister every moment of every day for the rest of her life, using that phrase whenever her mood dropped.

If I wanted to fix Melody, make her better, I needed to do *more*.

And, in order to *really* help her, I needed to know what was wrong.

But how?

"Careful," I told her, eyes on the computer monitor. "If you go in there unprepared—"

My sister entered the building, ignoring my warning.

As soon as the interior loaded in, Melody's character was frozen in place, knocked to the ground. A shadowy thief emerged from one of the building's dark corners, walked over to my sister's rigid, paralysed body.

"What the heck?"

"Told you so," I smirked as the thief pick-pocketed and robbed my sister blind. "That's—"

The idea hit me like a lightning bolt.

I jerked, sat up straight, eyes wide.

"No way!" Melody complained, though I was barely paying attention to her or the game now. "How is *that* fair?"

Her laptop.

There had to be a reason she didn't want me to see it. Just like there had to be a reason she didn't want to leave the house.

Could *it* contain the answers I was looking for?

It was a thought I'd had before. One I'd dismissed pretty easily. Melody didn't want me using her laptop, that much was made obvious when I'd offered to repair it for her and she'd refused. Who was I to argue with that? But my mentality had changed since then.

My sister needed help. That was my top priority.

So what if she didn't want me to snoop? So what if she didn't want me to know what was bothering her so much? At the end of the day, me saving her from whatever issues were plaguing her would be more than worth going against Melody's wishes.

That laptop might be the key to figuring out Melody's problem.

All I had to do was steal it.

Which was, admittedly, easier said than done.

"Ben?" Melody's voice cut through my musings.

"You're right," I said with a quick nod. "It's not fair. Same thing happened to me the first time I played. Tracking down the thief and getting your stuff back is the first part in a longer quest. Ask around the town, see if anyone knows who or where the thief is."

"Or," Melody smiled, "you could just *tell* me."

Same goes for you, sis.

"Where would be the fun in that?"

"Your laptop is a source of anxiety for you, isn't it?"

"Yes," my sister whispered, the word stretched long.

Well, that was easy. Confirmation of my assumption.

All I had to do now was figure out how to access it.

"Is your laptop password protected, Melody?"

"Yes," my sister replied softly.

Great. One more roadblock in my way.

"If I asked, would you tell me what the password is?" I asked, crossing my fingers.

"No."

Fuck.

"What if... What if it was so I could fix it? Would you tell me the password then?"

"No," Melody repeated.

I sighed.

Here I was again, powerless because my sister wouldn't give me the information I needed to help her.

The only way I'd get what I wanted was by going against Melody's wishes. The only way I'd be able to help her was by *making* her tell me the things she didn't want me to know. The password to her laptop, the problems that'd turned her into a recluse. I had no other choice. I *had* to trick and manipulate her.

It was the only way I could help.

She didn't want to tell me her password? Fine.

It'd just be a smaller challenge for me to overcome. And, when I did, when I got her to tell me the password she didn't want me to know, I'd be that much closer to unlocking *all* of her secrets.

So, how should I go about this?

"I want you to picture your room, Melody. It's empty. No one is in there except you. Your brother isn't there. It's not his voice in your head right now. In fact, there is no voice in your head. You aren't aware of it. It's just you, in your room, alone."

If I could make her oblivious to my presence, maybe that'd help with plucking the secrets from her head.

"You're all alone in your room," I said, eyes flicking to my bedroom door.

She was laying on my bed, in my room. On her back, the shape of her mountainous breasts visible under the hoodie she had on. I did my best not to look, not to stare.

"And you want to sign into your laptop."

Melody shook her head.

The sudden motion caused her entire body to wobble, her massive tits swaying hypnotically in front of me.

I gulped, shook my head.

"You don't want to sign into your laptop," I said. "Do you?"

"No," Melody answered.

Okay. Fine. I'd just have to give her a reason to want to.

"There are important documents on your laptop, aren't there?"

"Yes."

"Things that, sooner or later, you're going to need. Your CV, your old school stuff, important pictures, saved emails." I honestly had no idea what she had on that laptop. Not a fucking clue. But there had to be *something* crucial. "Things that you'll need to access at some point. Right?"

Slowly, Melody nodded her head.

"Yes."

"Which means you're going to have to log on eventually, right?"

A long pause. Silence.

"I..." Melody said, eyebrows knitting together. "I don't..."

"Listen to my voice," I told her, leaning forward in my chair. "Only my voice, nothing else. Relax for me, Melody. Let it all go. No thoughts. No worries. No emotions. Nothing. Just my voice."

Dammit, Melody.

What was her fucking problem?

Why wouldn't she let me help her?

"Your brother is helping you," I said, voice harsher than I'd intended. "I'm helping you. I'm going out of my way to make you feel okay, to take away all the sadness and depression you've been feeling. I'm helping you, aren't I?"

"Yes," Melody whispered.

"You owe me for helping you," I stated. "I deserve *something* in return for everything

I've been doing, don't I?"

"Yes," my sister repeated.

I opened my mouth, shut it.

What next?

Demand that she give me her laptop password I exchange for my help? That wouldn't work. I knew it wouldn't.

What could I do?

How could I make things like they were before?

I blinked.

Wait... Would *that* work?

Hypnosis could take a person back in time, make them relive a memory or event from their past. It could set aside years, make the subject temporarily forget entire chunks of their life.

So... What if I reverted Melody back to the girl she'd been a few months ago?

It wouldn't be a solution to Melody's problems. Even if I tried to maintain the 'revert' permanently, I'd be stuck with the same issue of having to renew it constantly with a command just like I did with her 'seal the bad stuff away in a box' programming. And, if I did revert her back to a time before whatever event changed her into who she was now, I'd hardly be able to get her to open up about it – the reverted version of her would have no recollection of the events.

But, in theory at least, I *should* be able to get her to log into her laptop for me.

Whatever her reason was for not wanting to log into her laptop, it wouldn't matter. I could simply 'revert' her to a time before it. I could get her to log on to her laptop.

Unless she'd changed the password over the last few months.

And, if I *could* get her to sign in for me, I'd have full access to all her files and secrets.

Something on there had the answer. I could *feel* it.

Tomorrow, I'd find out what'd happened to turn my sister into the miserable shut-in she'd become. And, once I knew that, I could start working on making her better.

Making her happy.