



DRIFTING

BOOK 1

N O E S E G A L

DRIFTING

BOOK 1

NOE SEGAL

Drifting Book 1

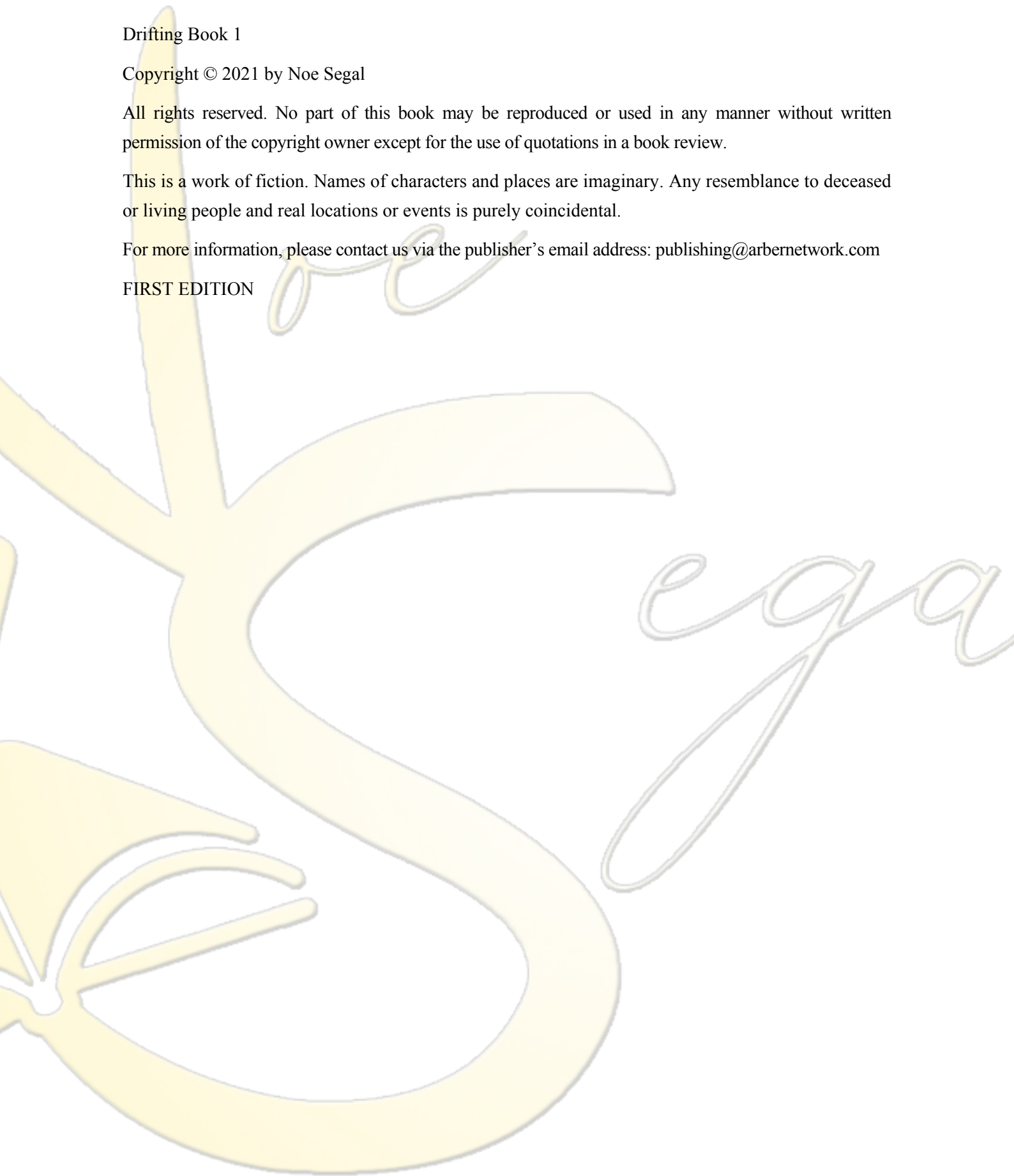
Copyright © 2021 by Noe Segal

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or used in any manner without written permission of the copyright owner except for the use of quotations in a book review.

This is a work of fiction. Names of characters and places are imaginary. Any resemblance to deceased or living people and real locations or events is purely coincidental.

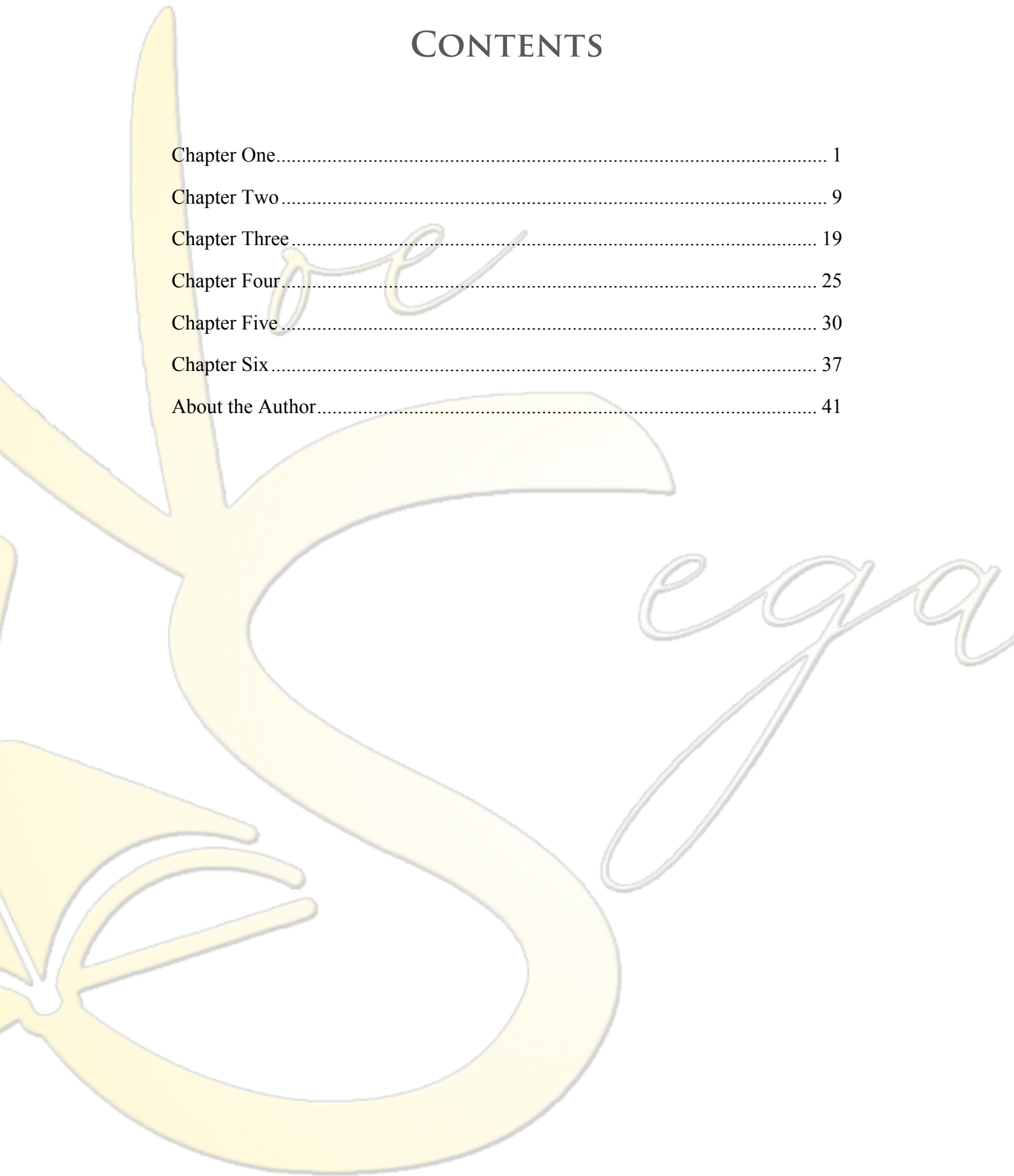
For more information, please contact us via the publisher's email address: publishing@arbernetwork.com

FIRST EDITION



CONTENTS

Chapter One.....	1
Chapter Two.....	9
Chapter Three.....	19
Chapter Four.....	25
Chapter Five.....	30
Chapter Six.....	37
About the Author.....	41





CHAPTER ONE



It was Dr. Nadia Markoff's first time speaking in front of a large crowd. She waited behind the curtains of the stage of the massive college auditorium. The place was already jam-packed with people coming to listen to her speak at the scientific seminar about Drifting. It is the study of the unnatural brain wave phenomenon, and Nadia was the formal representative presenting its current findings and how understanding it could impact the future as the world knew it. The lights in the room dimmed as the noise from the crowd reduced to complete silence. The host, the college chancellor Henry Dean, stood at the podium ready to speak. He looked about the room and once casually tested the microphone with his finger to make sure it was on.

"Ladies and gentlemen, patrons of the scientific pursuit of knowledge and those craving to understand the unknown, I want to thank you all for being here today to talk about Drifting. Drifting, or Astral Drifting as we sometimes call it, is a rather recent phenomenon that has taken place in various regions throughout the world. People capable of projecting their self-consciousness onto others, sometimes teetering along the edge of the very fine line of time. With numerous reports of Drifters being able to predict events within our immediate future to needle-point accuracy as well as being able to recall events of the past right down to provable detail, the phenomenon has become its own focus in scientific study. Joining us today is the woman leading this scientific field. A doctor in neural sciences who has dedicated her life's work and studies to the study of Drifting, Dr. Nadia Markoff."

Nadia breathed out heavily with nervous anticipation as she walked out on to the stage and waved anxiously to the crowd of people. She cleared her throat as she pushed up on her black, thick-rimmed glasses and brushed back some of the loose strands of blonde hair that she had otherwise balled up into a neat bun atop of her head. She held out her notes and took in a few short breaths as the host graciously moved the microphone down to meet her, as he stood over six feet tall and Nadia was bare five and a half. She nodded a pleasant thank you to him as he hurried off the stage.

"Thank you all so much for coming and showing your support for the scientific discovery on this wonderful evening," she said with a mild stutter hidden in her faint yet distinguishable Russian accent. "I had always dreamed of coming over to the States as a little girl with the hope

that I would one day be in this position, talking to a group of avid listeners about the true beauty of discovering mysteries in our world. Over the past five years since this phenomenon has come to light to the public, we have seen its use be depicted in fictional crime drama television shows and in books exaggerating the supernatural as a glorified fantasy. I'm here to tell you that it is not fantasy, but reality."

She paused to clear her throat as a few people in the audience shouted on in a supportive cheer for her as she nodded and laughed.

"You're doing great! We adore you!" some of the voices claimed.

"Thank you, but I am hardly anyone to admire," said Nadia gracefully. "Rather, I would prefer our focuses be turned to our demonstrator here today." She smiled as she gestured offstage where a young, handsome gentleman stepped out, dressed in a fine suit with combed-back hair. He couldn't have been any older than Nadia was, in his early thirties. The spotlight turned to focus on him as he waved and approached Nadia. He smiled at her and shook her hand as Nadia maintained control of the mic. "This is Peter Russo, a construction worker from Staten Island here today to voluntarily commit himself to sleep so that we can witness first hand the powers of a Drifter."

She looked at Mr. Russo and smiled kindly, mouthing a 'thank you for being here' as some of the staff brought out a comfortable chair for him to sit down in. Mr. Russo smirked and nodded to the doctor as he rolled up his sleeve and sat down in the chair. Nadia approached him with a syringe that contained a short term sleeping sedative that made the entire audience gasp in anticipation. She gave it to Mr. Russo in the arm as he sat comfortably and nodded towards her. Nadia smiled and quickly moved back to the podium and touched the mic, making it squeak as she adjusted it and winced.

"Oh! So sorry about that," she said as she grinned awkwardly and cleared her throat. "Now, Mr. Russo has volunteered and for the sake of time he's agreed to be put to sleep by a concentrated anesthetic. This will put him in a dream-like state almost immediately. We will then be able to study his brain wave patterns through the monitor you see these fine gentlemen bringing out here for us now." She gestured to the large neural monitor as the assistants hooked the wired nodes up to Mr. Russo's head. "We will start with reading Russo's brain waves and detecting his neural wiring as they will at first operate like a normal person would when dreaming."

As Mr. Russo started to slip into a deep sleep with his head against the chair's cushion, the monitor started to buzz and beep with its readings. There was a long awkward silence as Nadia waited and watched, her heart pounding with anticipation. She hoped Russo would be able to perform under such peer pressure. He had volunteered to be one of Nadia's few patients whom she had studied the brain patterns of regularly. He was not only cooperative but had

managed to provide readings with confirmable proof of drifting on a consistent, nightly basis. Once he started to visibly snooze, the readings began to fluctuate.

“Now, as you can see here, what is happening is the drifter is entering the dream state of rapid-eye-movement sleep. His brain is working its neural network the way most humans do when they dream.” The graph began to spike and beep which caused several of the audience members who were invested in the demonstration to gasp with surprise. “And here we can see the moment that separates a normal dreamer from a drifter. By all accounts and purposes, Mr. Russo’s body is asleep and in a catatonic state, because his mind is no longer with him. His mental state is, in a metaphysical sense, drifting through the air as we speak. He is connecting with someone or all of you. We can not possibly determine yet if the process is done subconsciously by the drifter or if the selections are random. Still, when the drifter wakes, he will be able to retain a picture-perfect memory of his experiences during drifting which we will then be able to record for further study.”

The beeping suddenly started to rapidly increase and Nadia turned and looked at Mr. Russo, alarmed. It was then clear to the audience that what was happening wasn’t supposed to happen. Nadia suddenly felt a powerful onset migraine hit and she pressed her fingers to her temple. The assistants on stage hurried to get Mr. Russo unhooked from the machine as the auditorium lights started to flicker from the strong power fluctuation. Nadia stumbled over to Mr. Russo and placed her hands on his as she felt him suddenly grasp hold of her wrists.

“Mr. Russo?! Peter!? What is happening?!” she called out to him.

One of the assistants hurried over with a bottle of smelling salts which they quickly popped open and placed it under Mr. Russo’s nose. The drifter proceeded to convulse as he wafted in the ammonia from the medication and his eyes popped open. He reached out and grabbed hold of Nadia. “It’s okay Nadia! I’ve got this!” he cried out. “Just hand it over to him and we can be on our way!”

Nadia’s eyes widened to hear Mr. Russo speak these words. They harkened back to a memory she had long since repressed, and to hear them again sent shivers down her spine. The assistants both managed to pull him off of her as she stumbled back and gasped in shock. It was unprecedented before this moment that a drifter managed to embody an event that took place in her personal past. To just have had heard those words repeated back to her the way Mr. Russo did lay heavy on her heart. She felt the sudden headache disappear almost as quickly as it came as she walked over to the podium and looked to the audience, unsure exactly what to say.

That was when the host came back over to take control of the situation. “Ladies and gentlemen, we seem to be experiencing some unforeseen phenomenon in the act of drifting and

will have to ask at this time for you to stay in your seats while we escort everyone off the stage.”

He then helped Nadia who suddenly found it difficult to walk off the stage. “I don’t understand, Henry,” Nadia said with a gasp for air. Her heart was racing a mile a minute. “I don’t understand what happened that was so different from all of the other times.”

“Let’s just get you seated, Dr. Markoff,” said Henry. “You look like a seasick sailor right about now. We can’t have you getting sick on us, now.”

“Something with the monitoring system,” said Nadia as she continued to ramble. “Maybe it was taking in too much information at once. Is Mr. Russo okay?”

“He’s waking up though acting incoherent,” said one of the assistants. “We’re taking him to a quiet room so he can find himself once again.”

Nadia nodded in agreeance as Henry helped her sit down on one of the chairs backstage. “Yes, do that,” she said with a grunt as she sat down and rubbed her temple. “I think... I think he targeted me.”

Henry curiously knelt down next to her. “Do drifters usually cause mental duress on the people they’ve connected with?” he asked.

“No, usually a drifter simply observes. And the information transferred from the connection is like nothing more than a simple touch of a finger to a shoulder, but this...” she rubbed both parts of her temple and looked back at Henry. “He repeated the same words my fiancé said to me just moments before he died. That is not something anyone else but I know.”

“Oh my god,” he reacted as he reeled back from the revelation. He reached out and gently rubbed the doctor’s back. “I am very sorry to hear that.”

A tear finally escaped Nadia’s eyes as she rubbed them. “It’s okay,” she said with a heavy sigh. “It happened nearly six years ago now. We were walking home from a long night out in the city when a mugger held us at gunpoint.” She breathed out and closed her eyes as she could still envision that moment just like it was yesterday. “He wanted my purse, and I remember David, he said to me, ‘It’s okay Nadia, I’ve got this, just hand it over to him and we can be on our way.’ He then tried to reason with the mugger, and when the man took my purse he tried to take his gun. It went off and killed him almost instantly.”

“Jesus, doctor, I am so sorry for your loss,” said Henry, unsure what else to even say at that point. “That is a terrible thing that happened to you, and you’re saying this isn’t something that Mr. Russo had any reason to know about?”

“No,” said Nadia as she shook her head. “I don’t share my private life with my patients. The only way anyone would know that about me is if they knew me back then or recognized me from the news that night.”

“Well then, at any rate, this is a phenomenal breakthrough that happened live on a stage,” said Henry. He stood up and held out his arms, ready to take a positive spin on the event. Nadia looked up at him, wondering if he was serious. “Look, Dr. Markoff, it is a terrible ordeal, of course, and you have my sympathies. But I plan to use this information at the board to further push your research studies, so you’re going to want to find a positive light in all of this quickly.”

Nadia nodded and breathed out. “I suppose you’re right,” she said. “Just... give me a few minutes, if you don’t mind.”

Henry nodded and patted her shoulder before heading off past the stage to see how the drifter was faring. Nadia could still hear the commotion outside talking about what they saw and what was going on. The tangibility of such a new and phenomenal science was hard to prove. Nevertheless, Nadia knew this event was going to open up new doors to her and her research. Her concern started to drift towards Mr. Russo as she wanted to block out her past memories the best she could. She was already going to have to share the story more times than she is willing to, to provide a credible connection to the event and the drifting phenomenon. After taking the time to regain her composure, she habitually pushed up on her glasses and stood from her seat.

As Nadia exited the stage, she was approached by a handsome young gentleman. He had been watching the whole event from the audience. “Excuse me, Dr. Markoff?” came the soft-spoken yet enthusiastic voice. Nadia paused and looked at him with a smile. He was likely a student, but couldn’t have been much younger than her. As he approached she felt her heart flutter with a strange sensation. He held out his hand to shake hers. “Thomas Cochran, ma’am.”

“Thomas? Or Mr. Cochran?” she asked with a smile.

“Thomas, ma’am,” he said with a nod. “I watched the whole thing and was mesmerized by the proceedings. I honestly wasn’t aware of how much work had already been done in studying this phenomenon.”

“Well, it’s been in no short thanks to chancellor Henry Dean and the school for leading our funding,” said Nadia with a nod. “Did you want to ask me anything specific? Seeing as students aren’t normally allowed back here.”

“Oh, I’m not a student, Dr. Markoff,” said Thomas. “I was actually coming to ask if we could help each other.”

Nadia’s eyes widened in surprise. “Help each other?”

“I can do the same sort of things Mr. Russo can do,” he explained. “Ever since I was a child.”

“A child drifter?” Nadia seemed taken aback. As far as her research had seen thus far, drifting was a phenomenon that happened as subjects got older. It was one of the reasons why the skill seemed so unhoneed and uncontrollable amongst her many patients. “You mean you’ve been experiencing astral drifting since you were a child?”

"Yes ma'am," said Thomas. "I read your thesis on astral drifting that suggested the phenomenon happened when the brain reached a certain age of maturity. Something that just sort of triggered, often with puberty. I've been able to do it since I was at least five or six years old. I thought maybe we should talk?"

Nadia looked at Thomas up and down like he truly was the whole package of a fine specimen. A handsome young man with auburn hair and deep green eyes brought a certain soothing quality to his presence. The fact that he stood there and claimed something so bold to contradict past presumptions she made happened to make the situation all the better. "I see," she said, scrambling to collect a coherent thought with her words. "We might just have a lot to talk about."

Thomas nodded and smiled with excitement. "Perhaps, I mean, if you're not busy at the moment, or later today...?"

Nadia looked back to listen for Mr. Russo and the assistants attending to him. She pondered the urgency in that moment and figured it was too immediate an opportunity to let go of. Her heart was still pounding feverishly as she looked back at Thomas and smiled. "I'm free right now," she said. "If you'd like. Just let me check on the well-being of my patient and I'll meet you at the front?"

"I'll see you there," said Thomas as he breathed out with some relief of tension and turned to hurry out to the front of the building.

Nadia watched him leave as she curiously rubbed her chest to calm her racing heart. She wasn't sure what it was about the mysterious young man that triggered her emotionally like that. She was always such a calm and composed person, but in that moment it was more of a struggle than she'd ever like to admit.

She turned and hurried to the room behind the auditorium where Mr. Russo was taken to ensure he was in good health. The rugged young man sat up as she entered and smiled. "Dr. Markoff, I'm so glad you're okay," he said as he breathed heavily. "The way these people were talking about what happened, I was afraid I gave you some serious head trauma."

Nadia reached out and gently cupped his hand graciously and smiled. "I'm fine, thank you Mr. Russo," she said. "That was quite the episode you had there. We're going to have to talk more about it in your next session, I just had something come up."

Mr. Russo furrowed his brow. "Oh?" he simply asked.

"It's just something that can't wait," said Nadia. She nodded to him in reassurance. "Take it easy and rest a little without attempting anything too wild and keep this in your thoughts. We'll keep up with our regular weekly meetings and talk more about it then."

She nodded to her assistants knowing they will take care of her patient as she hurried along out of the room. Nadia felt her heart skipping beats as she proceeded to make her way to the front of the building. The thought of spending some quality time with this handsome and

fascinating young stranger seemed to really rile her up in ways she didn't expect from herself. She had just turned thirty two years old and this was the closest thing that's come to a man asking her to do anything since before she met her former fiance. She knew she had to keep the appearances up but she felt like a giddy school-girl, completely shutting out everything that had brought her mood down before. Nadia was always good at turning negatives into positives. She was alive in that moment, much like in a dream, as she opened the door to see Mr. Thomas Cochran waiting for her.

"Doctor," he said in acknowledgement and with a soothing smile as he pulled on the strap to his bag that was thrown over his shoulder.

That was the look that he made when he first approached. The look that seemed to melt away everything around her. Nadia saw remnants of the past and her fiance standing at the foot of the university where she finally walked away with her fellow graduates.

He said the same simple word of acknowledgement to her as they embraced. Nadia caught herself from reliving the moment verbatim. She approached Thomas with open arms only to drop them to her side and laugh awkwardly. "Well, Thomas, it seems you have me a little off guard today," she said as she tried to laugh off her unusually warm approach to a total stranger. "It's not everyday I have someone actively seeking me out to talk and share in their gifts."

She noticed the bag he carried on his back and remembered his confirmation against being a student at this particular college. It surely didn't strike her to be a typical college student's backpack. "Did you travel here?"

Thomas nodded as the two proceeded to walk down the sidewalk towards the bus stop. Nadia didn't have a car nor did she need one living in such a large and bustling city. Neither did Thomas by his readiness to follow right alongside her. "I traveled from upstate," he said. "About three hours by Amtrak."

"All that way just to come to the demonstration?" asked Nadia. "I didn't even realize the story had much of a following outside the city limits. Drifting is a very niche topic of conversation, and many people still don't seem to take it very seriously."

"They treat us like we're something on television, like the Long Island Medium, and all that crap," said Thomas as he shook his head. "It's not the same as a charlatan playing a weak minded crowd or family."

Nadia looked at him and just smiled with curiosity. "What about your family? How did they take to your episodes?" she asked curiously.

"They thought that I had some kind of epilepsy or night seizures," said Thomas. "I was committed when I was twelve until they couldn't hold me anymore. I've been my own since then and have rarely talked to my family."

Nadia stopped as they reached the bus stop and looked at him sorrowfully. "I'm so sorry to hear that," she said. "I'm sure that was a very hard time for you."

"I don't dwell on it often," said Thomas. "Once I learned to sort of control my drifting, I was able to focus my attention on my parents and see what sort of life I was missing. They may have done right by sending me away."

The sound of the bus approaching filled in the dead silence as Nadia breathed out and Thomas turned his attention to see it pull up and come to a stop. The two shared a moment without words as he smiled and gestured to her to be the first to get on the public transit. More than willing, Nadia proceeded to step on with the handsome stranger and ride to wherever his idea of a good place to eat was.



CHAPTER TWO



“Okay, so you had lunch with the guy, and now he’s going to be your patient,” said Oleana. She was Nadia’s closest friend and a professor at the local college funding the drifting research. Oleana adjusted her large oval glasses as she looked at the doctor who was just grinning ear to ear as she worked diligently in her private office. Oleana clicked her tongue and smirked. “You know, I think there are some laws in place to prevent that kind of scandalous behavior.”

“It’s not scandalous,” said Nadia with a delighted chuckle. “It would be if it was you, and he was your student. Besides, I call them patients because I feel like I am caring for them, but they are not in any means legally my patients. It’s all by volunteer, I help them better understand and cope with their powers and they help me by giving me something to research and work with. There are no grounds for scandalous behavior there.”

Oleana smirked. “I’m just giving you a hard time, you know that,” she said.

“I do,” winked Nadia as she wrapped up her work on the computer, hit save, and stood up. “Now then, if you don’t mind. My new patient is about to arrive.”

Oleana stood back and rolled her eyes as Nadia gathered up her things from the mostly barren office space to take down to the labs. The area she got to work in was a temporary office usually meant for substitute teachers at the college. The chancellor had been kind enough to let her use it for her notes and documentation. Everything else was to be conducted in one of the biology department rooms where Nadia had her entire setup for patient sleeping studies to better understand the drifting phenomenon. Oleana casually walked with her friend as she skipped along excitedly to her other workstation.

The date, if it were to be called that, with the handsome and intriguing young man went over swimmingly, with the two talking a lot about their understanding of the phenomenon and the various individual experiences they both had, both with Thomas as a drifter and Nadia as an observer. Thomas stressed his ability to control his targets with great precision and his ability to see a longer range of people’s pasts and futures. This came as a double-edged sword for Thomas, as he had met people whom he knew when and how they would die and could not tell them for fear of being called a liar. He spent a lot of his life keeping these stories to himself, and Nadia was more than happy to listen to all of them. There was so much to discuss that she

didn't even get to hear half of it all by the time they were done eating. They had been holding up a restaurant table to themselves an extra two to three hours than expected. There was a natural attraction between the two of them, and the chemistry was palpable.

"What about your patient Mr. Russo?" asked Oleana. "That whole thing yesterday was something else."

"I talked to him last night, and he said he was fine," said Nadia. "He was more worried about hurting me with what happened than anything else. So far, the incident has not made any sort of public news, and I think the chancellor wants to keep it that way."

"But what do you think about it?" asked Oleana.

"I think that it's hard to tell until it can be repeated again," said Nadia. "Thomas is willing to take the same medication Mr. Russo did to see if it affects the sort of things he sees and if he shows the same symptoms while being monitored."

"Oh, isn't that sweet," said Oleana with a smirk as they reached the lab room. She sighed and leaned on the door. "Let me know if there is anything you need. Oh, and you should be careful about volunteering yourself to a drifter. You never know what they might find snooping through your pain."

"I don't have anything to hide," said Nadia. "I wasn't hiding what happened to my fiancé. It was just not something I'd tell anyone."

Oleana nodded, not wanting to let the conversation slip back into something genuinely sad for the both of them. She had known Nadia and her fiancé for a long time and also knew about what happened to him during the mugging that night. "Well, I mean, there are other private things lonely women do, is what I am saying," she said with a smirk as she patted Nadia on the shoulder playfully. "Trust me, I know."

Nadia looked at her and blinked, then turned red. "Yeah right," she laughed. "That would be uh, quite embarrassing, to say the least."

"You know I bet it happens," said Oleana. "You can't expect every drifter to be the most honest person. I know you. You're a very trusting person as it is."

"I trust two things, my numbers, and my gut," said Nadia with a nod. "Now then, if you'll excuse me, I don't want to keep him waiting."

"Oh shit, is he in there?" asked Oleana with wide eyes as she attempted to look.

Nadia chuckled. "No, not yet," she said with a heavy sigh. She knew Oleana meant well. It was a concern that skeptics often raised about drifters and their ability to invade people's personal space and learn things they had no business in learning. Nadia was always the optimist and wanted to give people the benefit of the doubt that they were inherently good and honest, however naive that might have made her. "But if he was, he would have heard everything you said."

"He will anyways if he goes snooping hard enough," said Oleana as she gestured to her head and nodded. "Just keep that in mind."

As she turned, she nearly ran square into Thomas as he made his way around the corner of the hall. "Oh! Excuse me," he said with a smile.

"Oh no, excuse me," said Oleana as she gazed up at him. Thomas was a rather tall man, and she was a short woman but she could tell immediately where the attraction was. Thomas was arguably one of the most handsome men she had ever seen. She stepped aside for him to walk by to Nadia and she met her friend's eyes with a face of awe. She looked at Nadia and mouthed, 'Are you serious?' behind his back.

Like an immature schoolgirl, Nadia squeezed her face in excitement and just mouthed 'I know, right?' to her before she quickly made her exit down the hall. She turned to Thomas and cleared her throat. "Right on time," she said with a smile.

Thomas nodded. "I am, and I'm a little nervous," he admitted as he stepped into the lab room and looked around. He could see the comfortable chair that looked like a modified version of what you'd see at the dentist's made for a sleeping patient, a table full of testing supplies, and the same monitor he saw the day before going haywire in front of a live audience. He looked at everything then back to the smiling doctor as she looked at him. "Mostly about actually being tested. I've never done it quite like this before."

"Well, it's a semi-controlled environment," said Nadia. "As long as you trust yourself to drift where you want to go, we shouldn't run into any issues. What happened yesterday wasn't life-threatening or harmful to anyone. There was just a lot of panicking because it happened during our live demonstration, and we didn't understand at the time what was going on."

"Well, that's why I'm here, right?" asked Thomas as he walked over to the chair and felt the soft cushion. "To test that it was the anesthesia?"

Nadia nodded as she pushed up her glasses while looking him over. They had only just met, but the day they spent just talking made her feel like she knew him, despite knowing nothing of actual significance about him beyond the stories of his drifting as a child. Despite Oleana's concerns, he came all this way. He expressed genuine interest in Nadia and the work she was doing, which was enough to entice her into pursuing this endeavor with him as the primary patient.

"So, you told me you've never had anything like this done before," said Nadia as she came around and watched Thomas sit down comfortably in the chair. "Yup, just sit down, just like that, I'll have to get these nodes placed on your body, mostly on your chest and head."

"So do I lift my shirt?" asked Thomas as he prepared to do so.

Nadia looked at him, then at his chest, and nodded. "Yes, that would be preferred," she said with a great amount of resistance, not wanting to laugh at something that should have been obvious but also because she really wanted to see more of this handsome man.

"What do you want me to try and focus on?" asked Thomas. "I don't know how coherent I'll be with the medication, but I could still fall asleep and make an attempted trajectory for where I will astral drift."

"You don't need to focus on anything specific. I'm most interested in the brain wave patterns and matching them to the effects of Mr. Russo's patterns when under the anesthesia," Nadia explained.

"I understand," said Thomas as he lifted his shirt. Nadia looked at his chest and bit her lip. She was very attracted to him as it was. She needed to maintain her professionalism in order to pursue him in any way. He was far too crucial to the potential new aspects of research that she couldn't have him compromised with thoughts of her the way she has started with him. She put her tight latex gloves on and snapped them against her wrists before taking up the cold metal nodes and placing them sporadically on his chest. Thomas chuckled. "That's cold, actually."

"So sorry," said Nadia as she lifted one up and blew her hot breath on it to warm it up before placing the last one on his chest.

"That worked," said Thomas with a smirk as he looked at her and smiled. He watched as she came around and started hooking the nodes to his head. He, too, had quite the attraction to the beautiful young doctor. He could tell she was very self-conscious of her looks because of the big framed glasses, but they were part of what drew him to her in such a way. He would be lying to himself if his thoughts weren't drawn to her especially considering that she is a woman of similar age to him. It had been a long time since he had been with a woman, which was not a detail he bothered to share with the good doctor during their 'date' the day before. He watched as Nadia placed the last node on his head and breathed out. "What next?"

"Now..." said Nadia as she trailed off to grab the medication. "We will put you under voluntary anesthesia... you already signed off on this, right?"

Thomas chuckled. "Yes, yes, I did," he said as he looked at her. "I trust you, doctor."

"Well, that's good, my job is at stake here with every patient I take," she said with a chuckle to hide the fact she was always very nervous about taking on new patients for this reason, even more so now that she had a high school girl kind of crush on one. She cleared her throat. "As requested, I got you the pills instead of the shot. These will keep you down for about twenty minutes without ammonia to wake you up. Hopefully, that will be enough time for you to get a good read."

"It will be more than enough, actually," said Thomas as he took the bottle with two pills in it and took them down. He sat back against the chair and closed his eyes. "How long is it supposed to-"

Just like that, he started to drift off before he could even complete his first thought. He opened his eyes one last time to see Nadia look at him with intense admiration, only for his eyes to close once more, and he drifted into a sleeping state. His mind was sentient as he slept like any astral drifter was capable of doing. Like astral projection, drifting was the permittance of his consciousness to seek out occupiable space within the mind and memory of other people. What astral projection could not do was see beyond the present time continuum like drifting could. It was much like a soul separating from its body to look into the fate of other souls.

What Thomas could not do was that he could not properly explain to Nadia the method in which he attached and experienced these events. Most drifters claim to drift and only astral project. In contrast, real drifters see and experience the events as if they are the other person on auto-pilot. This was also why they could only see beyond the realms of time. They could not intervene in the metaphysical or physical sense, only observe.

Thomas often did not choose a direction of where he wanted to go even though he could. In a last-minute decision, he chose Dr. Markoff simply to keep her study contained and to believe him when he told her what he saw.

That was when everything seemed different. Thomas opened his eyes and saw a school cafeteria. Teenagers were sitting at the tables in groups, but the table he was at – no, the table Dr. Markoff was at – had no one else. Except this was a memory, so she wasn't "Dr." yet. She was just Nadia. She looked down at her tray of food and the book beside it – "Textbook of Clinical Neuropsychology." But this was a high school, why was she reading a college textbook? Nadia opened the book to the center pages and began reading. Thomas found that although all the technical terms were Greek in his own mind, somehow, his link to Dr. Markoff enabled him to follow the material easily. *Of course she was reading college-level texts in high school, he thought because schoolwork was too easy for her.*

"Hi, Nadia, is it?" asked a voice over her.

She looked up, and Thomas saw a boy with a mop of curly black hair and grey eyes, wearing a crimson-and-yellow sweater with a varsity F on it. Josh Bryden, quarterback, the most popular boy in the school, and the most handsome guy in the world, including George Clooney.

"Is it Nadia?" asked Josh, and Dr. Markoff realized she hadn't answered him.

"Is who Nadia?" she asked, then in her own mind, thought *Moron, moron!*

Josh laughed. *He also has the best laugh in the world, including George Clooney, she thought.* He sat down. *Why is Josh Bryden sitting down at my lunch table? Even the other geeks don't sit with me.*

"I'm Josh," he said.

"You are," said Nadia. "I mean, yes, I know."

She was painfully aware that the other kids were glancing across at her table.

"Listen," said Josh, "I'm on the football team, and the coach says I have to keep up my grades. I heard that you're the school brains, so I wondered if you'd be willing to tutor me. For a fee, of course."

"Fee?" said Nadia, feeling as though she was in a dream or the star of a Hollywood movie.

"How much do you charge?"

Josh laughed again. "Um, I think I'm supposed to pay you."

"Sure," she said. "Let's do it that way."

Now the scene shifted suddenly, and they were in Dr. Markoff's bedroom in her childhood home, and Josh was on her bed kissing her...but, no, that wasn't real, that was what she imagined back then. In reality, they were at her desk, he on one side, a pile of books between them.

"I think I'm actually getting this," Josh said. "Once you know what the length is, you can calculate the circumference. And that's how this Greek guy knew the size of the Earth?"

"Eratosthenes. Right."

"You explain this stuff a lot better than Mr. Trimble."

"Thanks."

Why am I only giving one-word answers? He must think I'm an idiot! No, it's worse. He thinks I'm a brain, one giant brain, like a creature in a sci-fi horror movie.

Thomas thought: *If that's how he sees you, he's the idiot.*

"You coming to the game Saturday?" asked Josh. "It's going to be good."

"I don't really like football."

"Oh."

Quick, say something he will like.

"Will you be playing?"

"Um, yeah. I'm the quarterback. I kind of have to be there."

"I'll come then."

"Great! Very cool."

Now the scene shifted back to school, on the outside corridor.

"Hey, Nadia, just got back my Math paper," said Josh, grinning broadly. He flipped it at her: B+.

"I never got a B-plus in my life. Well, you know, except in gym."

"Football plays are like geometry," said Nadia. "If you understand those, you can understand geometry."

"Anyway, thanks a lot for the tutoring. You're cool."

He turned and joined his friends, and Nadia started to walk behind them. Then one of the girls turned and stared at her. Carol Créquy, blonde and slim, her teeth so white they actually dazzled in bright light.

"Why are you following us, nerd?" she said.

"What?"

"Tutoring is over," said Carol, speaking loudly. "You can stop following Josh around now."

The students around started to chuckle.

"I'm not, I have a class..." Nadia stammered.

"C'mon, Carol," said Josh. "Be cool, let's go."

He walked off, hand around her waist, and didn't even look at Nadia. They never spoke after that. Thomas could feel in his own stomach Nadia's hurt and embarrassment and bitterness, and he could feel how those adolescent wounds even now lurked in the recesses of

her brilliant brain. *But that was no big deal*, he thought and then also thought *But it is the cuts of our youth that never heal*, but he did not know which thoughts were his or Nadia's. Then he saw the auditorium in his/her mind, and he saw himself in her eyes. Her thought was, *He's even more handsome than Josh Bryden. I wonder if he's also an idiot*. Then they were speaking. *He was mesmerized by the science?* she thought. *He reads scientific articles?* *He's more handsome than Josh, and he's got a brain.*

Thomas felt how Nadia was both attracted to him and cautious about him. He felt flattered, but the truth was that he had been impressed with her long before he came to her lecture. She wasn't a nerdy girl anymore, but a woman who was among the most brilliant scientists in the world. Not only that, but she was perhaps the only woman with the knowledge to understand and, more importantly, appreciate his strange gift.

Thomas knew that, despite all her accomplishments, that awkward, shy teenage girl still lived within her. He wanted to do something to help her, in both her professional life and, if she would let him, her personal life as well.

He had a similar kind of attraction, but his came from knowing who she was for some time and being intrigued in the fact that a beautiful young doctor was the one leading the revolution in science and technology to better understand the phenomenon of astral drifting. He had unintentionally shoehorned himself into this sort of position, but with it came some relief that his own attraction to her wasn't misplaced with platonic feelings.

He gasped as his eyes widened, and he saw the moments play out with Nadia's conversation with Oleana. As much as Oleana had a right to be suspicious of drifters using their powers to do such things, it was never something that crossed his mind and brought him some semblance of shame that it was the first thing he saw when he connected to the beautiful doctor on a soul binding level. He tried his best to shift himself away, maybe even leap into someone else. After all, he did not want to continue and be more invasive with the good doctor than he had already been, considering all she had done for him and was willing to do. His mind struggled to push the bitter images out as he tried to return to the task at hand and make this moment less awkward for when he woke up. He wondered if this was even something he should tell the doctor. Then again, Thomas was a terrible liar, and he knew it.

"You know I bet it happens," said Oleana, catching Thomas's attention as he saw everything from Nadia's perspective still. "You can't expect every drifter to be the most honest person. I know you. You're a very trusting person as it is."

"I trust two things, my numbers, and my gut," said Nadia with a nod. Of course, she would be the one to give someone like him the benefit of the doubt. "Now then, if you'll excuse me, I don't want to keep him waiting."

"Oh shit, is he in there?" asked Oleana with wide eyes as she attempted to look.

Nadia chuckled just as Thomas laughed. She seemed like she might actually be a funny person. He would like to get to know her and Nadia more and prove he wasn't the kind of

person to doubt, though the experience he just had would make that rather difficult. “No, not yet,” Nadia said with a heavy sigh. “But if he was, he would have heard everything you said.”

“He will anyways if he goes snooping hard enough,” said Oleana as she gestured to her head and nodded. Thomas winced at just how right she actually was. “Just keep that in mind.”

As she turned, she nearly ran square into Thomas as he made his way around the corner of the hall. “Oh! Excuse me,” he said with a smile.

Thomas could then see himself through Nadia’s eyes. This was the first time he had ever drifted into a moment that he was personally involved in, in part for fear of actually seeing himself and how that would make him feel. He supposed he was attractive, a handsome and rugged young man with enough fashion sense not to look like a homeless bum. He didn’t want Nadia to know that fact about him, as the drifting had caused many complications in his relationships and ability to maintain trust in people, either from learning their secrets or not being trusted to stay in their inner circle. He knew he would have to tell her eventually if he was ever going to pursue anything more than this professional relationship they built up to hide their true initial attraction to each other.

He continued to watch their moments transpire up until the point he watched himself fall asleep. He was a little confused at how the medicine could be that strong, but then again, he was a lightweight when it came to everything from drinking, trying pot, and even taking cold medicine, so it wasn’t that unusual. Now he knew he was within the present time, viewing himself sleep through Nadia’s eyes as she casually wrote down the various numbers that the monitor screen would jump to and look over her previous notes from her other patient, Mr. Russo. He smiled to himself, respecting her professionalism with all things considered. He was curious to better understand this phenomenon he was performing, and she was going to be the person that would help him get there.

As Nadia worked diligently, she couldn’t help but notice as Thomas sat that a prominent bulge appeared in his pants. She gasped, as did Thomas, much to his embarrassment. Nadia looked around the room to ensure no one was there to look as she pulled out another pair of her gloves and put them on before she quickly and gingerly reached over and pushed Thomas’s bulge around so it wouldn’t look so obvious in the upright, standing position. “Oh my god, oh my god,” Nadia whispered as her face turned hot from her shy embarrassment. “I’m so sorry, don’t be mad.”

Thomas’s body was still as his mind and soul were currently within Nadia’s. He couldn’t help but laugh and shake his head at her earnest attempt to save him from embarrassment when he woke up. He truly felt that at this moment, there was more of a connection to be had with her than any other person he had known before. Not only did she have an attraction to him, but she was earnest and respectful. Something Thomas found to be a lacking trait in people or, at least, the ones he met before her. He wanted to wake up and tell her it was okay and she didn’t

need to be embarrassed, but at the same time, he knew that could become a double-edged sword if she found out what it was he saw her do just the night before.

He wanted to wake up, and usually, he could force himself to do that. His time was running short as the medication was supposed to wear off in due time and allow him full control again. Doing so would give him the power to wake on command. He proceeded to pull away from his astral connection with Nadia in an attempt to return to his body. As he did so, he suddenly jerked into the abyss of the astral plane, the area of limbo for those who do not find hosts. He gasped and flailed as he floated amidst nothingness. "No, no, no, back! I wanted to go back!" he yelled into the emptiness before he felt his body not only drift but actively get pulled into a new host.

Thomas could not see for a moment. His vision was often clouded when he was pulled into an unknown host. He had no idea how far away in location to the lab he had drifted, but he knew he was in a dark room. He felt uneasy, like a strong tense urge knotting up in his chest. He realized he appeared within the body of a man, a man who was unabashedly touching himself under a pair of sweatpants. As his vision sharpened, he saw photos of Nadia posted all over a wall that hung over this individual's bed. His eyes widened in concern as he noticed several of the photos were taken from voyeur positions outside of windows where Nadia was working in the lab and others where she appeared to be in the midst of undressing in her bedroom.

Thomas shook with shock and disgust. His connection to Nadia while attempting to leave must have forced him into drifting into the mind of someone who also thought about her intensely. He shook his head in disbelief as the man pleased himself while rubbing over a photo of Nadia's face that looked to be professionally taken from the school's website. It was clear he stumbled into someone's mind who was obsessing over Nadia in the worst way possible. The man smacked his lips as he rubbed over the photo of hers. He groaned as he drew close to orgasm, and Thomas felt himself pull away from the connection before he saw any more. He was once again drifting back into the astral space as he realized he could control his thoughts more clearly.

He closed his eyes and focused on his body as he shifted back into his body, and his eyes opened wide. He gasped as the machines were going off, and Nadia was in a panic to try and calm him down. His heart was racing as he reached out and grasped at her arm. "Dr. Markoff!" he shouted. "Jesus Christ!"

Nadia took his hand off her wrist and grasped it gently between her palms. "Hey! Hey! It's okay, you're awake, you're awake, and with me, you're here now," she said, calming him the same way she has had to do for several patients in the past who panicked during their sessions. Thomas sat back and let himself catch his breath as he could feel his heart pounding through his chest, and his erection still notably prominent as he twisted his legs in his seat. Nadia continued to speak soothingly to him. "You're awake, and you're with me. You're no longer drifting. You found your home."

Thomas breathed out and smiled. "That works for your patients, I take it," he said with relief. "It's soothing. You're soothing."

"I have had a few cases early on where the drifters were inexperienced and often had trouble recognizing if they were in their real body again for several hours after waking up," Nadia explained.

Thomas looked at her and breathed out slowly with a smile. "That's... very genuine of you, doctor," he said. "I have to tell you something, though, with all things considered, the drugs and how they seemed to affect my ability to control myself."

"Oh yes, I'm very excited to hear," said Nadia with a gleeful smile. She grabbed up her clipboard and proceeded to ready herself for what Thomas had to say. He looked at her and breathed out slowly with a morbid look on his face. She blinked, looking at him with concern. "What is wrong?"

"Well..." Thomas sighed and looked down. "The medication put me into such a state I couldn't control myself. I drifted, and the first person I came to was you."

He looked at her, not wanting to keep this moment they unexpectedly shared together a secret. "I drifted into your astral persona and saw your memory imprint. I uh, well, I saw you last night." Nadia blinked and looked at him, stunned and red in the face without the ability to say anything. Her lips quivered as she stared into his eyes. Thomas reached out to her and took her hand. "I... I promise you on my life, on everything, I did not purposefully seek you out, nor did I mean to see what I saw."

Nadia blinked as her voice squeaked from having nothing to really say. She breathed out and looked down. "That, that is the most embarrassing thing I've ever experienced," she muttered. Her hands quivered as her eyes drifted to Thomas's nether regions. "It, uhm, it really does explain a few things, though."

Thomas looked down, knowing he had a full-blown erection in his pants still but didn't want to embarrass her further by stating he also saw her adjust him. He cleared his throat. "Well, that would tell a lot of things," he said. "I suppose it was like having a wet dream."

"Yeah, yeah, it was something," said Nadia as she looked back to the paperwork she recorded on the event then back to Thomas, still holding on to her hand. She breathed out slowly and smiled at him. "I guess today came with a lot of revelations and surprises, huh?"

"Yeah," said Thomas as he struggled with how to word the disturbing bit he saw at the end. Maybe it was best to not mention it, at least not yet. All it would do is worry her. He knew he would want to further investigate this mysterious stalker before he raised any more alarms. His lip twitched as he gently smirked at her overall reaction to the situation, and his grasp lightly tightened on hers. "I really think it has."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



In his home in Oklahoma, **Noe Segal** has always had his fill of romance reads. And as a biology major, he has always had an interest in the scientific mysteries and theories of the world. Taking the pen into their own hands, Noe Segal brings new books with heart-throbbing romance and science-fiction for you to enjoy. Enjoy *Drifting Book 1*, and the upcoming installations of this series and its thrilling mix of conflict, romance, and some paranormal-inspired science fiction.

Enjoyed reading **DRIFTING BOOK 1?**

***Don't forget to leave us a
review on Amazon Kindle***

For ARC reviews, please start your review
with the statement “**I received an ARC
copy,**” followed by your honest review.

YOUR REVIEW MATTERS

[Click HERE to leave a review](#)