

There's something you're not telling me." Jarred was staring at Maddie from his expensive chair, behind his expensive desk. Maddie stared back, swallowing the instinct to trust him. To invite him deeper into her messed up life. Into her mind.

Expensive suited the man. But not as well as the warm, inviting clutter that softened the periphery of his office. His reputation with hospital staff bordered on hard ass. But Maddie had always known better. Even if she hadn't, the sight before her would have confirmed what she'd felt the first day they'd met. The walls of Keith's office were covered with a hodgepodge of diplomas and civic awards. Small prints of impressionists' work. Those of modern realists. There was even a sampling of what looked like children's Crayola creations. His bookcases were filled floor to ceiling with volumes on varied topics. Fiction and nonfiction, aligned with less and less care the easier the titles were to reach.

Jarred's was an ordered but approachable mind. Intelligent but sensitive to subtlety and the value of indulging the imagination. Maddie had liked that about him—his logic and his no-bullshit approach to taking life as it came. The softness underneath the reserve he kept firmly in place for others. She'd liked it a lot. She'd felt drawn to him, first just a little. So little, she'd thought she was imagining the intensity of that instant connection. Just like she'd imagined all the other weird things that had started happening around the same time. But before she'd known it, Jarred had gotten inside. With each smile or his jokes or his gentle touch, and the way it all had eased the chaos brewing in her mind.

Not a good thing as it turned out. Not now that her job was on the line, and he had the final say. Not when she found herself wanting to reveal everything she didn't understand herself to a man who held the keys to her professional future.

"According to you and your bosses—" Maddie willed away her blank stare, settling for a smile that was closer to *You're imagining things* than *Help me!* "—there's plenty I haven't told Dr. Yates."

"I'm not Dr. Yates. And I don't like the hospital board putting me in the middle of this any more than you do."

"But here you are." And there his voice had been on her machine last night, saying that her administration-mandated therapy sessions would be conducted in his office from now on. That accepting his help was her only shot at salvaging her future.

"You seem almost desperate to disengage this morning," he said. "If I didn't know you well enough to be worried, I'd be intrigued."

"Intrigued?" Actually, he was a smug son-of-a-bitch, just like everyone had said. "Is that what shrinks are calling it now, when you stare at someone as if they're a juicy journal article you can't wait to write up?"

Before Sarah's nightmares began haunting Maddie, sparring with Jarred had been a guilty pleasure. First over a quick bite in the hospital cafeteria. Then when they ran into each other, grabbing coffee from one of the machines sprinkled about the building. Dr. Untouchable had finally admitted that he'd been inventing ways to accidentally hook up with her. They'd moved on to late night or early morning meals at a diner near her apartment, before or after one of Maddie's grueling ER shifts. Out of sight of any St. Chris staff who might find it gossip-worthy to catch them together. Because just six months ago, the male-dominated realm of emergency medicine had been Maddie's playground. She'd finally made it. She was home free. No more worries.

Then Jarred had started to notice the bizarre things Maddie had hidden from everyone else. How she'd found herself eating food she hated but didn't remember ordering. She'd say something out of character—something rude and hostile like Sarah used to say. But when Jarred commented on it, Maddie wouldn't remember whatever had shocked him.

"So," he said, "you made things difficult with Matt Yates because he was treating you like just another patient. Well, you're *not* just another patient to me, Maddie," he leaned forward, "but you're not giving me anything to work with either."

"Maybe I'm trying to keep you on your toes." She took her own stab at smug. "We can't have such an important doctor wasting his time."

"Is that what I'll be doing? Is that what I was doing every time I tried to get the most intriguing woman I've ever met to open up about what was bothering her?"

Jarred flashed his Harrison Ford, circa Raiders of the Lost Ark, smirk.

For a moment, Maddie forgot how to breathe.

"Do your bosses know how inappropriate this arrangement is?" she countered.

"Do you want me to remove myself from the situation? Because if Yates had had his way, that call last night would have been your termination notice. Not me sticking my neck out to give you one more chance."

"Don't tell me you're pissed because I'm not thanking you for this!"

"Something's changed." Jarred did that head cocking thing shrinks do when they think they have all the answers. "Since the last time we spoke. When was that, three weeks ago? Things have gotten even worse, and I remember offering to admit you to psych back then."

"I had a long night. Nothing new."

"Yates said you haven't been sleeping at all."

“Like I said, nothing new.”

“Are the dreams that bad?”

“Who said anything about dreams?” Sarah’s rebellious, eat-shit smile spread across Maddie’s face. Maddie coughed, covering her twin’s sass with the back of her hand.

“Okay.” Jarred steepled his fingers in front of him, elbows resting on his desk.
“Nightmares, then. Fantasies. Whatever’s going on in your head while you’re staring at the ceiling all night. Can the bullshit, Temple. I’ve read Yates’ files. Not that I needed to. When we met, you were the most professional, best-liked resident on staff. What’s been messing with you so badly the last few months that you have to be supervised when you see patients? Why wouldn’t you talk to me about it back when I would have helped you prevent all of this?”

It wasn’t the question that jerked Maddie straighter in her chair. It was the way the warmth in Jarred’s voice washed over her. How the worry in his gaze felt too good, deep inside where she secretly needed him. Craved him, like an addict who couldn’t resist the seductive pull of something she knew would destroy her. The man saw her—really saw her. And his undivided attention was as dangerous as it was warm...comforting...flooding her mind...

Making her skin crawl!

Because sometimes, it was like she could read Jarred back—the way Sarah had been able to feel people toward the end. Not just with intuition or empathy or a little brush of minds. But all out becoming the person’s feelings. Taking them in. Making them herself, and her them. Sometimes it had felt like Jarred was in Maddie’s mind, sharing his secrets while he dug for hers.

These days, everyone at St. Chris was happy to keep her freak show at a distance. But Super Shrink wanted in. So much for bluffing her way through this session the way she had with Yates.

“If my career is over,” she challenged, “just man up and say it, then leave me the hell alone.”

Eight years of college packed into six, most of it while Maddie was still a teenager. Her internship. Two years of residency. The only identity that would ever fit. It couldn’t really be gone.

Jarred smoothed the rumpled end of his tie.

“It doesn’t have to be.” He flipped open a file—a red one. Yates’ had always been blue.
“Tell me about your twin.”

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Maddie was out of her chair and halfway to the door before she realized she'd moved. She reached for the doorknob.

"I wouldn't do that if I were you." Jarred's warning and a flash of last night's nightmare froze her in place. "The people who pay my salary want my diagnosis to jive with Yates'. And they want it soon. I've stalled them by not letting on how much I already know about what's happening to you. I argued that you were at the top of your med school class. You aced your Boards, years before most doctors finish their coursework. You're a diagnostic prodigy. Innately gifted beyond your colleagues' ability to comprehend. You deserve one final chance. But you're falling apart emotionally, Dr. Temple. You've become a threat to your patients. You've lost all ability to focus in the ER. So, you can drown in denial and keep fighting alone and fail. Or, you can accept my help figuring out what's really going on. Which is it going to be?"

Maddie saw a malevolent raven in her mind. Her father's car exploding. An evil tree swaying. She imagined her fingers around the raven's throat, squeezing until she was free of the darkness. Really free.

Die! Sarah's voice demanded. *He has to die!*

Jarred wheezed.

Maddie spun back as he fought to inhale. He stared at her, as if he didn't want to believe what was happening, or that she had anything to do with it. Through the shadows fogging her mind, she reached for what was left of who she'd dreamed she could be. She forced herself to focus on Jarred's warmth, not the bitter cold of Sarah's insanity...