

*from "Deceptions" by J.J. Michael*

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For the last several nights, Lindy had not slept. Tonight, she had hoped the long, arduous love-making with her husband would finally bring her the much needed rest she so desired. Perhaps it was all the excitement of their upcoming journey, she thought as she lay cuddled in Nick's arms, listening to his soft snoring. Her mind raced as she thought of the enormous task of preparation that was still in front of her.

She wanted to get up and add "contact Paul" to her list of things to do to let him know that, for the next year, she and Nick would be living in a remote area of the Bangiagara cliff off Mali, the home of the Dogon people. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to contact them there and she wanted Paul to look out for Michael while they were gone. *But how could he?* Paul was in India and to get him to leave his ashram was like pulling teeth. No, she thought. Perhaps Gabriela could return from Paris to look after him. No, that would be worse than trying to get Paul to return. The only person left was Raphael, Gabriela's twin. Since getting a place with Josh, his college roommate, Raphael had distanced himself from the family. His visits home were infrequent and when he did come home, he didn't stay but a few hours, if that long.

Raphael would never mention Josh. Lindy had invited the two for dinner several times, but Raphael always refused the invitation. He knew that his parents had never really accepted Josh. Josh seemed so wild, not the type of friend she would imagine, or even want, for Raphael. But whenever he looked at Josh, Lindy could see the admiration and love - she believed it to be brotherly love - that Raphael felt for him.

Twice a month, Raphael would come home to wash his clothes. Passing through the laundry room, Nick noticed that some of the clothes Raphael was neatly folding could not have been his. They were too large and not Raphael's style. Having once been a fashion photographer, Nick had a sixth sense about attire. His face twisted as he looked at his son.

"You're washing his clothes?" he said, confronting him. Ignoring his father, Raphael continued folding the clothes.

"Raphael, look at me, man," Nick demanded. Raphael finally cast his cloudy blue eyes on his father.

"I'm only going to say this one time, Raphael: Loose him. He's not good for you. I've seen his type many times in the fashion industry. You don't want to go down that road, man. Trust me."

"What is his type father?" Raphael glared at him.

"You want me to spell it out for you. He's a f\_\_ing fag and you need to be careful who you keep company with."

Lindy could hear their voices as they shouted at each other. She ran to intervene, but Raphael had gone out the side door by the time she got there. Nick's harsh words hurt not only Raphael, but Lindy, too. Later, she tried as gently as she could to tell Raphael that his father was sorry for his choice of words. Nick had worked with gay models for many years and had seen the difficulties they faced everyday. He didn't want his son to have to go through that. Far from being grateful for the explanation, Raphael lashed out at her for even discussing the issue with him. She never approached her son again about his sexuality, but the hurt lingered, dividing the

family as Raphael's visits became less frequent. It was a long time before father and son would even talk to each other.

Throwing her sheets off, Lindy slowly untangled herself from Nick, slid to the edge of the bed and waited before making her next move. She didn't want to wake him. Easing herself out of the bed, she put her pillow where her body had just been in case he reached out for her. The light from the moon shone through the half-open blinds onto her naked body. Reaching for her white silk robe, she tied it tightly around her still small waist and slipped on white satin slippers.

Walking slowly and quietly toward the window, Lindy glanced back at Nick. He was as she had left him in their bed. She wanted so badly to crawl back under the covers with him. His full lips enticed her. Instead, she smiled at the sleeping man and thought how fortunate she was to have her soul mate as her husband. They had been married twenty-two years and he still looked as good as when she first saw him in college. The tall skinny boy had turned into a distinguished looking man. He wore his hair closed-cut and his temples had gone gray, as had his perfectly formed mustache. Lindy loved the way the mustache felt when he would use his tongue and lips to gently caress her body.

Lindy thought about how ironic life was with its twists and turns. She never thought hers would have turned out the way it had. Those early years of finding her spiritual path were not easy. She had been abandoned - *No*, she told herself, ***disowned*** by her grandfather and mother because of her choice to follow a spiritual path other than the traditional Christian path she had been bought up in. In those days, she was labeled a heretic and many times was told many times that her gifts of healing and of seeing spirits were the work of the devil. She had fought her gifts

for a long time, only to have Mary Magdalene, her spirit guide, to come into her life to be her Way-Shower.

Even today, in the twenty-first century, hers was a difficult path to walk. She only wished she could have resolved her differences with her grandfather, Reverend Perlie Johnson, before he had passed on. Wiping away a tear, Lindy thought about his death. He had been trying to walk to her after having suffered a stroke. Perhaps, she consoled herself, the generous inheritance he had left her was his way of reconciling with her. Sometimes, she could feel his presence and the presence of his wife, Amanda, her grandmother, called the Elder Healer.

Both Amanda and Mary were highly evolved spirits who were able to perform incredible wonders because of their high level of spiritual attainment. They would often materialize to give her specific instructions or knowledge while she was doing healings, or sometimes in her dreams.

Others still thought of her as different or as not believing in Jesus. She was Gnostic, believing in esoteric wisdom. Jesus, too, of course, but not the Jesus portrayed by Christian doctrine. She believed that, like Buddha, Mohammad and Krishna, Jesus was an Adept who had come to this earth to teach love and compassion. And when Jesus, in John 14:6, said: *I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me*, Lindy was told by Mary, who had been a disciple of Jesus, that the statement was taken out of context. Substitute the word *me* with *love and compassion*. One had to be like Jesus and show love and compassion to all. These were the main doctrines of the New Age Church of Melchizedek that she had help found.

The church had a school and healing center. Her best friend Betty Goldstein and a New Age group called the Awakener were the other founders. Back in the seventies, they had had

some difficulties with the local Christian churches. Ignorant of spiritual mind-healing, they considered the Elder Healer's miracles to be heresy and proof of the devil. There were attacks against her church, attacks that were spear-headed by her own mother, Margaret Johnson Pearson, of her old family church, Mt. Olive. But as the Awakeners had, as they themselves had predicted, overcame all adversity.

Margaret was still alive and to this day refused to see Lindy. Lindy had tried a number of times to learn the reason for her mother's hatred of her. As a child, she had thought it was because her father had died before she was born. Perhaps her mother, with her twisted mind, blamed her for his death. Staring out of the window, Lindy realized that she no longer cared whether or not her mother accepted her. She was a mother herself now and understood that a mother's role was not what society made it out to be.

Had she pushed her twins away because of all the attention she had given Michael? Did they resent her for giving them such a different life than their friends had? She knew that Gabriela detested her gifts and wanted nothing to do with the church or the healing school. Tears formed in Lindy's eyes as she thought about how detached the twins were from her.

Pulling a tissue out of the pocket of her robe, she wiped away the tears and quietly held back sniffles. Her soul was heavy and at times the pain in her heart was unbearable. Nick was probably right. She needed to get away to clear her mind and get back in touch with her spirit. She felt disconnected from God and her guides. Being isolated in the far reaches off Mali, she would be able to focus solely on healing her spirit and regaining her gifts.

Lindy pressed her faced against the window as she bathed in the rays of the moon. Glancing at the clock, she saw it was already two in the morning, but Diana - the goddess of the

moon - was waiting for her. Lindy abhorred that name because it was the name of Nick's old college girlfriend, who was also Michael's biological mother, Diana Reilly. Lindy knew it wasn't spiritually healthy for her to detest either the name or the person, but she couldn't help herself.

*Forgiveness - another thing I'll have to work on while I'm away*, she thought.

The light of the moon shown through the branches of the oak tree in the back yard and formed a circle on the open ground. The rays of light danced back and forth on the earth, making geometric shapes that seemed to form letters that changed as quickly as they appeared. Lindy took a deep sigh and rubbed her eyes with the white knuckles of her hands. She opened them to see five letters etched on the earth: "UNITY." *What could that mean?* Thoughts about the word passed through her mind, but she couldn't intuitively connect to any of them. Adjusting the belt of her robe, she moved toward the door. It was time to go.

Opening the bedroom door slowly and without making a sound, she stepped into the hallway. Passing the second closed door, she paused briefly and touched the door as if she were touching the person asleep behind it.

Michael, her miracle baby, now a grown man, was asleep in there. She thought of him as a man-child. He was so innocent. Born with multiply disabilities, Michael was left to die in a dumpster. Rescued by sanitation workers, he was declared a ward of the city. Eventually, he was sent to DC General Hospital where Lindy, a doctor, volunteered her services to help care for him. Michael captured her heart with his big brown eyes. He had a beautiful pink aura surrounding his body. It was love at first sight. Lindy later convinced her college friend, Paul DeVross, to marry her so that she could adopt Michael. It was a paper marriage that lasted from 1972 until the summer of 1977. Lindy thought about how nature and human life revolve according to cycles

when Nick Lewis, her college boyfriend, came back into her life that summer and everything changed.

Ironically, Nick turned out to be Michael's biological father, although he did not know that. He had been told the child had died at birth. Lindy was thankful Michael never asked about his birth mother, who lived a very high-profile life in Washington, D.C.

Lindy had refused the trip to Mali several times. The thought of leaving Michael alone to care for himself was too much for her to think about. But Nick refused to give in and kept pushing for the trip.

"Hell, Lindy, Michael is a man and it's time that you realize that. You're smothering that boy. Besides, you've taught him how to take care of himself."

"Nick, he still a boy in so many ways. And with Gabriela in Paris and the way Raphael has distanced himself from the family, Michael will be alone."

"You've got to let him go, Lindy. The housekeeper will be here to take care of the place and he'll be busy working at the University."

"That's not the problem. He can do academia, it's everyday life that I worry about. Who's going to cook for him, do his clothes, heal him when he gets one of those terrible headaches?," Lindy pleaded.

"Lindy, for God's sake, we're going. Michael is a man. He needs some time to himself, to stretch his wings a little. Honey, you won't let him breath."

Eventually, Nick won out. Even Michael wanted her to go. She couldn't fight them both. But she still worried.

Avoiding the ones that creaked, Lindy carefully made her way down the stairs without turning on the hallway light. She had done it so many times she could maneuver quite well in the dark. Still lost in her thoughts, she reflected on her separation from Paul that summer long ago. In the five years of their marriage, they only had sex one time. Paul had wanted to remain celibate in order to attain spiritual enlightenment. Lindy had seduced him the same night she had had sex with Nick. She could never forget that night; it was the night the twins were conceived. Soon after that, her grandmother had appeared to her in a dream and told her that her three children would form an alliance called the Holy Trinity, which had a special spiritual mission for humanity. Lindy's responsibility was to raise them so they would have the knowledge and tools needed to fulfill their mission, a responsibility she did her best to fulfill. The three of them - Michael, Gabriela and Raphael - were psychically gifted.