

*The  
Mind  
Entangle*

*Part One:  
The Discovery*

*Courtney Conant*



# **The Mind Entangled**

**Part One:**

**The Discovery**

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Smashwords Edition

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## **Prologue**

*What to say... What to do...* She sat alone on the edge of the park bench contemplating just that. She was so afraid to go home, scared of what she might find. Fear of her husband, of his family, kept her from returning. She felt that nothing good waited for her there. Home was supposed to be a place of solace and yet hers was a place she dreaded more than anything at that moment. The only problem was she couldn't stay where she was. With the temperature dropping and it being so late, she wasn't safe there either.

## Chapter One

They had met in college, he working toward his MBA in business management and she a dance major still yet undecided as to what she wanted to do with her life. He swept her off her feet and stole her heart almost immediately.

His friends called him up earlier that afternoon and begged him to go with them to Columbia College's Dance COLEctive, a modern dance performance with beautiful dancers. Their thinking was that they might try and pick up girls by showing they had a softer side to them. Since he was the handsomest of the group, they figured having him with them might make the whole thing easier. Of course, his accent and exotic name helped draw attention as well.

After the show, the guys went back to the stage entrance, hoping to catch the ladies on their way out. Adrianna was the last to exit and noticed the group standing outside talking to her fellow dancers. Among the men, she saw the most beautiful man she had ever seen. He towered above everyone, a full head taller than his friends. His pale blonde hair glistened as the light from the street lamp shone on it. He was well built and impeccably dressed. She couldn't take her eyes off him. He must have

felt her admiring him because he looked up and stared back. She found herself instantly attracted.

He walked away from the group, even as one of the other dancers was in the middle of talking to him. His friend called after him, yet he didn't take his eyes from hers. As he approached Adrianna, she couldn't help but to stare into his eyes. They drew her in, as if she were drowning. His eyes were the deepest shade of blue she had ever seen, like the night sky. She was lost from that moment on.

He introduced himself as Torstein Haldor, "Please call me Tor," he expressed, as if he were telling her she was the only one in the world who could call him by the name. He was originally from Norway but had moved to the states after his parents had passed away, hoping to build a better life for himself. His voice, deep and resonant, had thrown her into an almost dreamlike state. *How can someone so beautiful, so amazing, want to have anything to do with me*, she wondered to herself.

## Chapter 2

She always found herself drawn back to that first night. She knew that he was the one and yet she now wished she had never met him. She feared that he could see right through her and know these to be her true feelings. No matter how hard she tried to pretend to be happy, she could not change how she felt deep down in her soul. She felt he had been controlling her life over the last few years but not until that morning had she known how far it went.

He had left for work, same as always. Dressed in his fine suit, briefcase in hand, he kissed her goodbye and drove away. Only a few moments later, there was a quick knock on the door and an envelope slid through the mail slot onto the floor. Mail normally wasn't delivered for several hours so it seemed quite odd to her. Glancing through the peephole, she saw no one around. The envelope lay there, causing a brief moment of confusion. *I wonder what that was all about*, she pondered.

When she finally picked up the envelope, she saw that it was addressed to her. Well, as addressed as it could be, since only her name was apparent on it and nothing else. She inspected it further, hoping that it would contain something more, yet it was almost entirely blank. As if the envelope would bite, she held it with the tips of her fingers as she made her way to the window. She peered out the



blinds, hoping to see who had dropped it through the slot. There was no one in sight, not even a neighbor out and about...

Her hands began to shake as paranoia sank in. She had watched plenty of television shows in her life to have quite the active imagination. Her mind began to race as thoughts poured through her head. She was afraid to open it, even though it was obviously meant for her. Sitting down on the couch, she stared at it, trying to decide what she should do.

Finally giving in, she slipped her finger under the fold and broke the seal. Inside was a small sheet of paper with a single, handwritten line on it;

*You are in grave danger and must leave at once...*

At first she thought it to be some kind of joke. What form of danger? From who, what? What sort of sick person would play such a game? Rising, she began to pace around the room, wondering what she should do. Feeling uncomfortable and a bit restless being home after getting the note, she chose to go for a walk, needing a bit of fresh air. Just as she slipped on her shoes, she heard a creak as the back door was slowly opened. Glancing down at the note still in her hand, she ran...

## Chapter 3

She arrived at the neighbor's house within seconds and was pounding on the door. No one seemed to be home so she tried the next to no avail. Since she didn't have a phone, she decided it would probably be best to hide somewhere. She snuck around to the back of the home closest to hers, thinking that she might be able to catch a glimpse of the intruders, maybe enough of one to be able to describe them to police later.

As Adrianna peered around the corner, she found herself mesmerized by a soft blue glow emanating from her kitchen window. Working her way to the edge of the fence, she felt a need to see what was causing that light. She knew it wasn't anything of hers, her curiosity driving her forward. Pressing her hand to the post, she leaned forward, hoping for a better view. What she saw frightened her more than she could ever have imagined.

Two men were searching through her house, obviously looking for something. They appeared to be ordinary except absolutely nothing could have been considered normal about their eyes. The way they glowed drew her in, almost pulling her from her hiding place. It seemed to her as if the men called to her with their minds and the light from their eyes enhanced the strength of that call.

Just as she was about to step from behind the post, a movement off to her right caught her attention, dragging her eyes from her home. She heard the faintest sound of a child's laughter and a quick glimpse of a foot disappearing around the corner of the house. She wondered to herself, *how did a child sneak back here without me knowing?*

*There aren't even any kids that live here,* she realized as she peered after where the child had been. Feeling as though she had lost control of herself, as well as going a bit crazy, she edged her way back around the house to see where the child had gone. No one was there, yet she could still hear the echo of laughter in the back of her mind. She looked up and down the street, yet no one was there to be seen. She shook her head, trying to clear her mind. *Was the child even real or just a figment of my imagination?*

Realizing that the spell that seemed to have held her had broken, her subconscious told her that she had to get away. She needed to be as far from her home as possible before the men came outside and found her. Taking off at a jog, she made her way toward a place in which she thought she might be able to hide out for a bit.

## Chapter 4

Living in an area with cookie cutter homes and well groomed parks made finding a good hiding place difficult. There was a small private park that she knew of, fully enclosed with tall white rose bushes that lined the outer fences. Inside the park, it was almost a maze because the shrubbery along the walkways was tall enough to make seeing over it difficult.

Petrali Park had been her favorite place to go as a child. Her parents would take her there on the weekends if she was good. They would play hide-and-seek, running along the pathways, trying to avoid detection. Since the passing of her parents, she had not been back within the walls of the park but walked past it regularly, always remembering.

As she made her way toward the entrance, she realized that she didn't have a key to get in. She hadn't carried it with her for years, having not needed it. Glancing around to make sure no one was watching, she placed her foot on the front gate and hopped over as quickly as she could. Making her way forward along the entry pathway she thought, *it's the same, everything about it...*

The park may have been small but by the way the paths intertwined and crossed, she was able to walk for some time before she finally chose to sit and rest. As she

lay back on the grass, she hoped no one would come along. She needed time to think and get her bearings. Closing her eyes, she let her mind wander, thinking back again to the first days after having met Tor.

## Chapter 5

Right after introducing himself to her, he asked her to join him for a cup of coffee. “I would love that!” she replied enthusiastically, almost unable to keep control of her emotions. *Damn it, A, get a hold of yourself. Don't seem so eager*, she told herself, hoping that she could get it together.

She found herself overwhelmed by the man that stood in front of her. The man before her was amazing. She had always been pretty, yet she couldn't help but wonder what he saw in her. She was average height and very slender, with the “perfect dancer's build”, as her instructors always said. Her blue eyes were pale and couldn't come close to the brilliance of his. Her light brown hair lay plaited between her shoulders down to her waist.

Her high cheekbones and slight build gave her a desirable appearance, yet nothing compared to him. She was amazed he had chosen to talk to her over the others. Not wanting to let her unruly mind ruin her chance with him, she asked outright, “Why me?”

“Your dancing melted my heart in a way that I never knew was possible. No one has ever moved me as you did tonight.” He spoke with such sincerity, offering no room to doubt his feelings.

The blush spread across her cheeks, leaving her red and speechless. Never in her life had anyone expressed their emotions like that to her. Before her parents passed away, they taught her to be open and honest about her feelings. She tried to follow their teachings as best she could, yet it was hard when no one else seemed to.

She found herself lost in his eyes and wrapped up in his words. It was as if he could say anything to her and she would agree wholeheartedly. Love at first sight was something she had always scoffed at but not that night. Love had found her and its name was Tor.

From that moment on, they were inseparable. Each of her performances, he was there, offering his full support. He would meet her at the backstage entrance, same as their first encounter. Unlike the first meeting, he showed up without a white rose each time. It seemed to her that he knew it to be her favorite flower, since she had never told him and he never asked.

Seeing him made her heart race and her stomach quiver. No one had ever caused that sort of reaction in her, not even close. She thought that time would lessen the feeling but it never did. The more they were together, the more intense the emotions became. After only a few short months, she felt as though she couldn't live without him. He had become her lifeline, gave her something to look forward to each day.

They talked of the future, where they would go, what each wanted from life. He spoke of how he loved

Chicago and wanted to stay there but had no desire to live in the city. He wanted a nice house in one of the outlying suburbs, a quiet place to raise children and spend the rest of his days. The more he spoke of it, the more it reminded her of her home. She still lived in the house she grew up in. It had passed to her after the accident had taken their lives. She couldn't bear the thought of letting it go and always hoped to spend her life in the home. She couldn't help but think of how she would love to share her home with Tor.

She mentioned the idea of him maybe moving in with her after graduation, and he readily accepted. After getting his master's and her finishing her bachelor's in fine arts, he moved in, making himself right at home. With his skill level, he got a job instantly with a flexible schedule, giving him more time to focus on Adrianna. She was accepted as a principal in the Giordano Contemporary Dance Company. Her schedule, being so different from his, kept her away for long hours. Every chance she could, she was home with Tor.

She had never lived with anyone before and found it easier than expected. He kept everything neat and orderly, cooked dinner whenever she wasn't at dance practice, and wrapped himself around her each night as she slept, keeping her safe and warm. Life was perfect for her, everything she had ever wanted.

After several months of living together, Tor asked her to marry him. Since neither of them had any family, and their friends had all gone their separate ways after



graduation, they chose to go to the Justice of the Peace for their nuptials. Their life together began as if in a dream and continued the same.

## Chapter 6

Over the next year, Adrianna began to lose her interest in being a dancer, no longer having a desire to be in the spotlight. The director of the company tried to talk her out of leaving but her heart wasn't in it any longer. She couldn't deal with the late nights away from Tor. The more she was gone, the more distressed she became. With him working days already, she felt like not being home in the evenings could hurt their relationship and that was the last thing she wanted.

After awhile, she found she lost her liking for interacting with others as well. Being in groups and loud settings began to make her uncomfortable. Tor suggested that maybe she should stay home and take care of things there since he made more than enough to support them and their family that he hoped they would have.

Not being comfortable with him doing all the work while she stayed home, she began looking for a job. Tor didn't seem to like the idea of her working and tried to talk her out of it. "If being around people makes you uncomfortable, then you should stay home where you are comfortable, Addy," he would say.

After searching for some time, she found that the local library was hiring a librarian's assistant. What better job could she have than taking care of books? No special

degree was required for the assistant role, it was always quiet, and she would be dealing with the books more than she would people. To her it was ideal, and after some convincing, Tor agreed that it would be perfect for her.

After getting the job, things at home started to change. The library closed each day at six and she would get home just in time for dinner to be started. Since she was working days now, she found herself wanting to make dinner for Tor, instead of the other way around.

As time went on, she began taking on more and more of the house work. She was almost eager to do more at home yet she had never been a fan of cooking and cleaning before. It was almost as if she was changing as a person. She wanted to please Tor, to make him happy in any way that she could.

He would get home before her and sit on the couch, waiting for her to walk in. He claimed that each day he would hear her at the door and look up the moment the keys hit the lock so he could see her beautiful face as she stepped into their home. At first, she thought it was an endearing trait, but as time wore on, she began to worry. The way he waited for her when she got home made her feel as if she wasn't doing enough to keep him happy. She started to wonder, *what if he thinks I'm cheating on him? Is that why he waits for me to come home each day?* Not knowing what to do, she decided to talk with him about it.

“Tor, is everything okay? You seem a bit distant and on edge lately. It doesn’t bother you that I’m working, does it?”

He glanced up from the meal she had placed before him and looked at her briefly before replying, “Of course not, my dear. I just hate the thought that you might be unhappy in your workplace. I know how much you dislike being around people. I only want what’s best for you, my love.” He kept eye contact the entire time to make sure she knew he meant it, and with that, he went back to eating.

His statement brought her a peace she hadn’t felt for some time. When he looked at her like that, everything eased and she became calmer. She knew he was sincere and could almost feel his love for her running through her thoughts. She knew he was right, yet couldn’t seem to pin down when her dislike of people began. Her mind told her that she had always hated being around others yet it felt wrong somehow. Since she couldn’t pinpoint it, she let the thought go and went back to dinner.

After that night, things started going awry at work. It seemed that no matter what she did, everything was wrong. Her boss began riding her about things not being placed correctly on the shelves, books missing, etc... She couldn’t figure out what was going on. She knew that she was doing her job correctly yet her boss didn’t believe her. It was almost as if someone was sabotaging her work.

Each day as she came home from work, Tor would be waiting for her, and no matter how much she loved seeing him, it made her more depressed. She was no longer getting the enjoyment of working as she once had. To make matters worse, seeing her husband made her feel as if he were telling her that he was right and that she should leave her job. She knew it was all in her head and he would never tell her such things yet she couldn't get past the feeling.

A few days later, her boss let her go. She was making too many mistakes for him to be able to keep covering for her. She was devastated, as she made her way home, dreading the thought of telling Tor what had happened. When she entered their home, he looked at her and knew right away what had happened. He rose from the couch and wrapped his arms around her as she broke down.

“Don't worry, love. Everything will be okay. Look for the bright side.” He held her as she cried on his shoulder. That night, he made dinner for the first time in what seemed like ages. He took care of her, tried his best to cheer her up. By the end of the evening, she was smiling again and feeling a bit less upset over the situation.

After that day, she seemed to lose her interest in working entirely. She decided that it might be fun to have more time at home, maybe start a garden, or do some redecorating. The thought excited her and yet she had a deep seeded feeling that something was off kilter. She knew she had never wanted to be a stay-at-home wife and

yet she felt as if it was something she had always wanted. Her feelings were warring with her memories and she didn't know how to deal with it...

## Chapter 7

Adrianna woke with a start, forgetting where she was. As she glanced around her, the morning's disturbance came back to her. She had been sleeping so peacefully and wondered what woke her up. As she lay on the grass with her eyes barely open, she heard the sound of a child's laughter off in the distance. She sat bolt upright and glanced around, listening for the laughter again. *Did I imagine it? Was that the same child I heard earlier?*

The angle of light cutting across the shrubbery showed the time to be much later than she had expected. She must have slept for hours! Pulling her legs up underneath her, she looked around, trying to get her bearings. As she rose from where she had been napping, she noticed a slight shimmer at the edge of her vision. Turning quickly toward the spot, she felt as though her mind had cracked. As she watched, a young girl stepped out of thin air and, giggling, walked to her and sat at her feet.

She was a true beauty; pale blond curls fell over her shoulders, bows holding her hair, keeping it from covering her face. Her porcelain skin gleamed in the late afternoon sun. She smiled up at Adrianna, deep blue eyes glistening, emanating a soft blue glow.

Adrianna felt a shiver run down her spine as she slowly stepped back, bumping against the wall of brush behind her. She couldn't take her eyes off the little girl seated before her. "My name is Audhild Haldor and I am here to help you." The girl smiled as she bowed her head before her.

Adrianna stared in wonder and utter confusion. The child not only had the same look as her husband but also shared his name. "How is it that you have the same name as my husband, yet he told me that he had no family?" She was feeling completely lost in the moment. Nothing made sense to her; she couldn't wrap her mind around what was going on.

"Torstein is my elder brother. He disappeared many years ago and I haven't seen him nor heard from him in almost twenty years..." Audhild's voice trailed off. Her eyes moistened at the mention of her brother's name. "He has been gone for so long and our family has finally tracked him down."

"What are you talking about? Are you telling me that he has been lying to me this whole time?" It took her a moment for Audhild's words to register. "Wait... Twenty years?" She shook her head, trying to wrap her mind around what the girl was saying. "You can't be older than twelve! What sort of sick joke is this? What the hell is going on?" She turned her back on the girl and stepped away a few paces. Adrianna felt lost and betrayed. Who was she to believe, the little girl before her, looking so



much like Tor and claiming the same name as him or her husband that she loved more than life itself?

“There is so much for you to learn and so much for me to tell. I will start with this... I may look only twelve to you, but I have been on this planet for forty seven years and Torstein is my older brother. I have missed him greatly, as he was my closest friend and relation. It was his turn to experience the outside world, to learn and take in all that he had never encountered before.

“We are Torleif, the children of Thor. Torstein is the eldest, our leader, and he has been missing for what seems like ages. Our brethren have been searching for a very long time and tracked him to your home. We want him back and you seem to be keeping him from us.”

Adrianna still stood, facing the wall of green, not knowing what to believe. She had seen so many strange things that day, her mind all jumbled. She turned to face Audhild, collecting her thoughts as she made her way forward. “I must still be dreaming, right? This is crazy! Do you honestly expect me to believe anything that you just told me?”

Shaking her head to attempt to dispel the notion that the girl might have told the truth, she felt an odd sensation in her mind. “*You know it to be true because truth is all that I will ever speak.*” The sensation faded and she found herself falling to her knees, having lost all strength in her legs.

“I can only imagine that Torstein did not tell you of us or our powers. It’s the only way to explain your reaction just now. Has he never spoken to your mind before?”

Adrianna stared, as if dumbfounded at what looked like a child and yet wasn’t. The girl had just spoken to her, yet not a word had been uttered. No sound rose from Audhild’s lips, but they existed in Adrianna’s mind.

“We do not possess a vast deal of power, being only the children of Thor, as opposed to being gods ourselves. Telepathy and mind control are two of our greatest powers and the most commonly used.” Audhild reached forward, as if to show comfort. Adrianna jerked back, flinching from the girl’s touch. Audhild did not take offense from the reaction. “You need not fear me. I have read your mind and know you to be an innocent in all this. My brother must either love you immensely or he is hiding behind you. I can only hope it is the former.”

Adrianna tried to pull herself back together, to wrap her mind around what she had just discovered. She couldn’t find a way to trick her mind out of believing the girl. How could she after what she had just experienced? As she sat, a thought came to her. “Was it you that wrote the note this morning?”

“Yes, it was the only way that I could get to you first, without the others knowing. If I had used my telepathy, they would have sensed it and tried to stop me.” She glanced down at her hands before continuing. “They

were after you, believing you to be the cause of his disappearance. I feared what they might do to you, so I did my best to get you away before they caught you.”

Adrianna shook as she remembered the light emanating from their eyes and the pull she felt upon seeing it. “I felt them calling to me, trying to draw me out of my hiding place.” As she sat recalling the feeling of being controlled by the Torleif in her home, it made her wonder about Tor. Had he been controlling her? Had he manipulated her in the same way that the others had attempted? A tear slid from her eye, as she realized that he had. She thought back over the past couple of years, remembering all the moments of doubt, all the times she felt as if she were missing something.

She broke down. The man she had love from the instant she saw him had been controlling her in the most intrusive and degrading way. He had used his powers to make her into his puppet. Devastated by her realization, she was unable to hold back the barrage of emotions and the tears fell.

Audhild, sensing what was running through Adrianna’s head, attempted to console her yet had no way to prevent the emotions she was feeling without using her powers. Since the whole issue was caused by the same type of powers as she controlled, it seemed wrong to her to use them in that manner.

Adrianna needed time to herself to think things over. She begged Audhild to leave. “I need to be alone

right now. I don't know how, but I believe you have been honest with me. None of this strikes me as being real, and yet it seems to make old confusions make sense in a disturbing way. I have to figure out what I'm going to do, and how I'm going to deal with Tor, before I even think about heading home."

She thanked Audhild for her help and rose to her feet. She closed her eyes for a brief moment and when she opened them again, Audhild was gone. If she had any doubts before, that one moment had confirmed that something was special, even magical, about her husband's family.

She couldn't believe that he had lied to her about family. She had always believed family to be one of the most important things in life and always thought that he did too. At least, that is what he had always told her. Now she wasn't so sure. What could be so wrong with his life to make him want to run and hide from them? Why would he lie to her about something like that?

Adrianna began to walk again, hoping it would help her to think. She couldn't stop the thoughts flowing through her head. The tears were still streaming down her face as she made her way to the park bench in the center of the Petrali Park.

Head in her hands, she cried, *what am I suppose to do?*

## **Epilogue**

As she sat, trying to decide what to do, a hand fell upon her shoulder. Jumping, she looked back to see Torstein. A tear fell from the corner of his eye as he spoke within her mind. “I’m so sorry...”

Adrianna stared back at him, not knowing what to say or how to respond. She was lost and answers refused to come. After a moment, she reached up and took his hand, knowing the reaction to be her own as opposed to something he planted in her head.

“I need to know, I need to hear it from you, what is going on. If you truly love me, you will tell me.” She closed her eyes and everything faded...

Watch for Part Two in The Mind Entangled short story series.

## **The Torleif**

Upon returning to her home, Adrianna finds her husband waiting for her, flanked on each side by men of a similar appearance. As panic strikes at her heart, she finds determination not to run. She needs answers and the only way to get them is to stay and confront her fear.



Courtney Conant, born and raised in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, currently lives in Arizona with her three cats and her imagination. She began writing at a very young age and has continued to do so throughout the years.



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