

The Lady in the Garden

At age 11, I awoke one morning in a panic. I was so hot that I couldn't breathe well. As I reached up to wipe the sweat from my face, I realized that not only were my hands swollen to twice their size but my face and tongue were also. I could hardly see my mother standing in front of me for my eyes were almost swollen shut. She was trying to get me to take some medicine. Although this was not the first incident, this was the worst. My mom put me in the car and took me to the emergency room. I was so scared, I thought for sure I was going to die. Mom kept saying "Don't worry honey, it's going to be all right. We're all here to take care of you." She's a registered nurse, it's part of her job to soothe people. But it only got worse.

I spent the next couple of days in the bed and the nights with my mom in the emergency room where she worked. I had these strange blotches all over me and some turned into big welts. All my joints were swollen and my whole body ached. The doctors didn't know what was wrong, they had never seen a kid with so many odd things at once. So, they sent me to a specialist. Months of tests and different medications revealed that I had rheumatoid arthritis and mixed connective tissue disease. The doctor said this could include Lupus but the test was inconclusive. The course of action for this you ask? Ten—yes, 10!—Bayer aspirin per day for 6 weeks and no stressful activity, not even gym class.

Several years passed. I had learned to accept the pain ... worse, to accept the "We don't know what's wrong" answer. I learned to smile and put on a good show for everyone. It's much harder than people think and of course, it doesn't last forever. As I said, I did fairly well for several years; however, by age 20, I was worn out, depressed, and forcing myself to get out of bed for work. So, once again I saw several different doctors who now said I had severe depression. I spent the next year trying various assortments of anti-depressants, which made life easier to deal with but did not make my body feel any better. Looking back, I can see why I was depressed. You would be too if you felt as bad as I did everyday. I finally went to a doctor who ran a number of tests based on my childhood history and concluded that I was not simply depressed but that my earlier diagnosis of Lupus appeared to be correct. Again I was put on a varied array of medications, none of which worked for more than a few weeks.

I next went to a specialist: a rheumatologist. We tried other medications, some made me sick, some gave me the hives, and eventually, some worked. It was a combination of Plaquinil 200mg three times per day, Lodine 800mg and Tagamet 400mg twice daily on top of that. This was the medical approach that finally worked the best. Sadly for my mother, and me it didn't work well for long and it was very expensive. So, although there is no medically known cure for Lupus, my mom started looking for a more permanent form of treatment. One day while watching Sally Jessy Raphael on television, she saw a healer: Dr. Eric Scott Pearl. She made all the arrangements for me to see him before she told me anything about him. It wasn't until we were making that first six-hour trip that she told me he was an alternative healer, that he wasn't going to touch me and that I was going to feel better. I laughed at her and strongly suggested that she might be in need of some professional psychiatric counseling. She replied "What do you have to lose?" Who could argue with that after everything I'd been through? Besides, she knew enough not to tell me until we were well underway in the car.

So, we arrived at my 11am appointment with me thinking , "This guy must be a quack." Can you tell I was skeptical? We went in and I filled out my paperwork. Shortly afterward, Kathy, the receptionist, took me to the healing room. In it there was a table to lie on, soft lighting and

sounds of the ocean playing in the background. Kathy told me to take off my shoes, lie down and relax. Easy for her to say. I tried, but I couldn't.

Dr. Pearl came in a few minutes later and to my surprise, he looked pretty normal. We talked for a few minutes about my major complaints, which were my hands. He asked me to hold up one of them. He held his hands on either side of mine but did not touch me. He began to move his hands around in this slow, circular motion. Suddenly, I was scared because there was this breezy feeling over my hand and this overwhelming smell of flowers. Flowers like I had never smelled before. I thought "Okay, this is really strange. His hands are moving much too slowly to create wind. And what about the flowers? How is he doing this?" He then moved to my other hand and that same windy feeling came. He asked me to close my eyes and all I could think was "he's a freak and I am obviously crazy!"

I closed my eyes and as he slowly walked around my body - doing whatever it is he does - the windy feeling followed his hands. What happened next really startled me! As my eyes flew wildly open, Dr. Pearl asked, "What's wrong?" I didn't dare say. I simply responded, "Nothing," although what I really wanted to say was, "Move away from my ankle, it's getting really hot!" You see I wear a healing stone around my left ankle that I got from this old Indian doctor in Oatman, Arizona, and every time Dr. Pearl came near it, my ankle got very hot. This was weird and I was not happy.

Throughout the rest of the session I was not able to relax. When it was finally over, he asked me if I had experienced anything. I told him about the windy feeling and the flower smell. He asked if I knew what the flower smell was and I said "You." He told me he didn't think it was him, so I asked if I could smell him. "Yes," he laughed and indulged me. Sure enough he didn't smell like a flower and oddly enough, the smell was almost gone.

He took a few notes and told me to come to the front when I was ready. He left the room. I must have been in there for about 10 or 15 minutes looking around for a fan, some flower-scented incense, something -- ANYTHING! -- to explain the wind and the smell. I even took a large picture down off the wall and moved the furniture around (something I haven't even admitted to him yet). But I didn't find anything. Now more than ever, I knew I must be crazy. I left the room and spoke only the briefest words to the doctor. I was in a hurry to leave. This was the strangest thing that had ever happened to me. My mom and I drove home, I slept most of the way and when I woke up, my hands didn't ache as much. I thought Oh, it's just a fluke.

I went about the next week as normal, taking my medicine and doing pretty much nothing else. The thought of my next appointment with Dr. Pearl loomed in my mind. I really didn't want to go back, but the following week we packed up and once again headed to California. I went to the next appointment, and I was very nervous. Kathy once again took me back. I took off my shoes, climbed up on the table and to my surprise I was suddenly very relaxed. Dr. Pearl came in and we chatted for a few minutes about how I had been feeling, which was slightly better than usual. He then asked me to close my eyes and relax. He was about to begin.

I closed my eyes and suddenly felt an indescribable peacefulness. I could feel the wind around my hand and the absolutely overwhelming smell of these flowers. Where is this coming from? I thought to myself, and in that same instance, a woman appeared. I couldn't see her face, just her white dress and dark hair blowing in the breeze. She was offering her hand, standing in this amazing garden of flowers above me. It was as if she were saying "Take my hand and walk through this garden," only she wasn't speaking to me, at least not

with words, and I couldn't open my eyes. I was no longer aware of Dr. Pearl's presence in the room ... or was I somehow no longer in the room? How bizarre! I wanted to go, I reached out, felt a tug on my hand and ... Boom!, I was up there in the flowers with her. Then, just as quickly as she came, she was gone.

My eyes flew open and Dr. Pearl was finished. He asked if I was all right. I was so terrified, I didn't dare tell him what happened. I just wanted to leave. He walked out of the room and this time I didn't look for anything. I just left. He and my mom were at the front desk talking when I came out. I don't think I said a word to either of them, I just headed for the door. Mom soon followed. We got outside and I started to cry. I couldn't tell her what happened, I couldn't tell ANYONE what happened. What would my mom think, much less what would other people think? I was terrified, alone in the thought that I really had lost my mind. We headed to the hotel where we were spending the evening. I had one last appointment the following day. I didn't say much the rest of the night.

The next morning came quickly. I went to the appointment even though I really didn't want to. I was afraid. During the entire session, all I could think was, isn't it over yet? It actually ended rather quickly. I think Dr. Pearl could tell something was wrong. I overheard him telling my mother, who was trying desperately to schedule me for another appointment, not to bring me back unless I asked to return. He told her that I didn't seem to want to be there and didn't seem comfortable with the visits. He was right. I met him out front, politely thanked him and we headed home. It was none too soon for me. I spent the next two days scouring every flower shop and plant store in Bullhead City, Arizona. I had to find these flowers or at least track down that smell again. It was as if finding them would let me know that I had not lost my sanity. But then, what would not finding them mean?

Try as I might, I did not find them. No one in the shops recognized them from the description and no one knew the smell. It's as if they don't exist anywhere on earth. It was about a week before I could begin to talk about what happened at Dr. Pearl's office without crying. (Having been an avowed atheist, this had shaken my belief system to the very core.) Now that I've brought myself to talk about it, I've discovered it's actually a relief. Some people look at me strangely when I tell them about this, but I can't let that stop me. People need to know that this type of thing does exist. Had my mother not taken me to Los Angeles, I don't know what condition I would be in today. In return, I hope that my words can help someone else. Since my three visits to Dr. Pearl, I have improved 100%. I can do things now that I thought I would never be able to do again. I can get out of bed with no problem, a process that used to require a couple of hours. I can open jars, some that my boyfriend can't! I can workout and exercise without feeling like I'm falling apart. And I can wear my jewelry(!) because my hands and ankles no longer ache or swell. Best of all, no more prescription medications!

You know, sometimes moms know a few more things than we give them credit for. Mine sure did. While I was running around questioning my own sanity, she was doing a little research of her own and found out that Dr. Pearl's healings are being studied all over the country. I feel a lot less crazy knowing that I'm not the only one seeing these angels and taking trips through flower gardens in the sky. I hope to someday find a way to thank her for tracking him down, driving me six hours each way to and from my appointments and for not giving up hope when I had given up all of mine. I don't know how to explain this and I don't know what to call it. All I can tell you is that it works. I feel as if I've been given the gift of life twice, once by my mother, and once again by Dr. Pearl. And I can't say thanks enough. Call me crazy...!