

PATRICE DRAPEAU

Into The Blue



A Story
Of Love
and healing

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Translated by Marianne Rossant

PART ONE

May 1994

Angoulême, France

May: third month of the ancient Roman calendar, from Maia, the Roman goddess of fertility and spring. It's also the name of a Pleiad, who gave birth to the god Hermes, from Zeus.

Dictum: *May women always please.*



Arcanum IX: The Hermit

The Hermit possesses an inner light to search deep within himself.

Excerpt from Ariane's book, *Le Tarot, un chemin peu fréquenté*, éditions Céphée

Jack drives slowly, his face rigid. He has an appointment with a clairvoyant, Ariane, about 30 miles from Angoulême. It was a cousin's idea, not his. One night, she found him drunk and slumped over on his couch. They talked. Jack would not entertain the idea of seeing a psychiatrist. She had suggested the name of a renowned clairvoyant, Ariane. He was intrigued, both by the idea, so foreign to him, and by her mythological name ¹.

Dejected, Jack finds himself in a small city. The roads are being repaired, and he has a hard time finding a parking space on the street where the clairvoyant lives. The parking lot isn't nearby, but he's not in a hurry. He doesn't really know why he's in this weird state of mind: first happy to go and now worried

about arriving. He makes his way carefully along the narrow sidewalk and remembers a forest not too far away. He'd much rather be walking through the woods than seeing a witch, and the chirping of the birds at this time of spring deepens his desire. But his cousin, concerned for his well-being, will ask him for an accurate account. He also needs to find a way out, to see, even from afar, the light at the end of the tunnel.

A gentle warmth reigns, the kind of weather he particularly enjoys when taking long walks, the perfect weather to cover about twenty kilometers effortlessly, in harmony with his surroundings. Yet today, this gentle warmth has no effect on him. He's too busy thinking about what she's going to tell him and why he's going to see a psychic when he's feeling so fragile. On the other hand, when his cousin came over last week, he wasn't doing so well. Not good at all. And he's starting to turn too much to whiskey.

The house is a large stone residence with a roof adorned with flower-festooned dormer windows, and on the side, a wooden balcony overlooking a small park. Turquoise-blue shutters frame the large windows on both the ground floor and the upper floor. An enormous solid wood front door impresses Jack. He stops. He takes out a cigarette to buy time and smokes without pleasure.

An aggressive bark snaps him out of his reverie, pushing him to ring the doorbell as if seeking refuge. The door opens immediately. He jumps. He expected to see an old woman with a rag wrapped around her head, her skin weathered by the years; instead, he is greeted by a cheerful woman who looks like a mamma straight out of an Italian film from the 1960s. Yet, Jack feels uneasy. His movements are stiff, and he cannot utter a word. Ariane welcomes him kindly, invites him in, and asks if his journey went well. He nods in response.

They make their way to a spacious living room adorned with numerous modern paintings. She invites him to sit on an armchair in front of her desk, while she takes a seat opposite him, on a backless stool. He'd seen the same one in the office of a former colleague who'd been badly affected by back pain. The table is cluttered with a deck of cards, a witch's ball, a notepad where Jack can make out some drawings, a cluster of colored pencils, and a lamp with a wooden base and a blue stained-glass shade, just like one his parents used to have in the old days. The room is bright, the furniture simple, the armchairs comfortable. A massive fireplace adds a relaxing feel to the whole setting.

Jack hadn't expected such a normal setting. He scans the room, searching in vain for something that confirms his preconceived notions—snakes in jars, braided garlic, an owl in the corner... Anything. Sighing, he stops his quest, saying to himself, *Nonsense. Come on, let it go. Breathe in, breathe out.* Ariane

smiles.

— Welcome. I sense this is your first time meeting a clairvoyant.

Jack can't respond at first, feeling breathless as if he had just run for miles, with a lump in his throat. He composes himself, adjusts his facial expression, clears his throat, and finally manages to say, after what seemed like an impossibly long moment:

— Yes, my first time.

— May I ask how you got my contact information?

— From a cousin who has already seen you.

— Did she explain the session to you?

— No, she didn't tell me anything.

— You won't have much to do. I'll be using two tools: this deck of tarot cards, and a crystal ball.

— Ah, okay.

She spread out the cards in a wide fan.

— I'm going to ask you to choose five Arcana at random from this deck, she says.

— Five what?

— The Major Arcana. It's what the 22 cards in the deck are called. Go ahead.

Faced with this simple instruction, Jack is confused.

— Just like that, at random?

— Yes, that's the idea, she replies. And now, you're going to hold this crystal ball in your hands for a while so it can absorb your energy.

— Like this? he asks, taking the object in his two palms with extreme caution, afraid he might break it.

— Perfect. Now, tell me, what brings you here?

Jack had expected this question and had prepared an answer. But now he's