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again. That is so comforting, so thrilling. I feel blessed, chosen, gifted, special. Everything has changed since I met Rosemary. Every morning, I wake up happy."

When I watched Altea make an appearance on the ABC morning show *The View*, all three of Barbara Walters' co-hosts were deeply moved when Altea

the Green Mountains rising up behind, when she took my notepad and sketched a vision of the place that, she said, had come to her from Grey Eagle, alerting her that she would eventually move into just such a property. Then, while she was at it, she flipped the page and sketched out my own "path," as she called it. This was

child, Josie, is a model for one of the characters in the book. Then she added the word *dentist*, noting that one of my children seemed to have dental problems. Indeed, poor Josie had recently been traumatized by the discovery of five cavities. Finally, Altea sketched in a house, since she'd sensed we might be moving.

Psychics bring us such good news. Altea's message is the stuff of world religions: Life is eternal; God has a plan for all of us.

contacted their dead loved ones, and then did the same for two stunned audience members. (Walters sought a private audience with Altea later.) General Colin Powell was the show's other guest, but it was Altea everyone went home talking about. After the show, two staffers rushed up to Altea and begged her to put them in touch with family members who had recently died. I couldn't hear what Altea said, but, in minutes, each of the staffers was sobbing in her arms.

I'd had my own private session with Altea last summer on the back porch of her country house in Vermont, and, I have to say, I came away from it deeply shaken. It wasn't so much what she said—although that left its impression—as the utter conviction with which she said it. We had been chatting about the unusual view of two circular ponds, with

when the world seemed to become very still. Working quickly, she drew a nicely widening pathway (a good sign, apparently), and added two rectangles above it to indicate that I had another writing project going besides my magazine work. "Is it another magazine?" she asked, looking up for the first time. "I see a lot of yourself in it. Are you writing a book?" I tried desperately to remain poker-faced, but all I could think of was the novel that I'd been working on for more than a year, one that was largely secret but for which I had high hopes. She thickened the lines of the second rectangle that represented the novel. "There's a lot of potential here," she said, gladdening my heart. "I'm looking at a book that could be a movie." Then she added stick figures of two children. "They seem to be involved in it." In truth, my younger

Right again: My wife and I had recently consulted a realtor, although, in the end, we decided to stay put.

Then, as casually as if she were pointing out a sparrow, Altea mentioned that there was a woman from the spirit world standing beside me. "She's ordinary-looking, short and a little on the plump side," she said. "She tells me she died of problems with her chest and heart. She's talking to you about this," Altea said, pointing to the rectangle that represented the novel. "She says you need a lot of patience with it." I couldn't imagine who she might be thinking of (although I came up with a possibility later), but I was absolutely transfixed all the same. I completely accepted the presence of this stranger from the hereafter. Later, when Altea told me that there was "a gentleman" standing beside me, I knew

My Mother, the Psychic

by Samantha Altea

Picture yourself back when you were 11 or 12 years old, pushing the limits of what you were told to do versus what you wanted to do. Although I was not a rebel—in fact, I consider myself to have been very close to angel status—I was human. Being human meant mischief and the occasional little white lie. Unfortunately for me, though, while I was growing up in this "normal" world of human imperfections, my life was very far from normal, and some would say further still from human. You see, my mum talks to dead people.

As a spiritual medium, she makes contact with loved ones who have passed on, and relays messages from them to those who find it impossible to see or hear them anymore. She chats one-on-one with the dead, telling us what

they say—a sort of radio receiver for the spirit world.

Can you imagine growing up with a mother before whom you were unable to tell the merest untruth? Faced with the all-too-familiar question "Bedtime, darling. Did you wash your face?", I would stare up at my mum with my practiced angelic look and reply, "Yes." Her eyes would glaze as she looked over my shoulder. "Mmm," she would say. "Your grandpa says you haven't." My grandfather had been dead for five years, and since he passed on, he'd turned into a bit of a snitch. Knowing that it was senseless to argue with your mother and your dead grandfather, I would dutifully go and wash my face. I was a very clean child.

It was sometimes hard being my mother's daughter as a teenager. Imagine that you're young and in love and your

for sure that it was my late father. In fact, I got the same uneasy feeling around him that I often had when he was living—and then felt guilty about it all over again. Later still, when Altea said that after Grey Eagle came into her life she started taking bubble baths out of modesty, I understood that, too. Out on her porch, the air seemed thick with the spirits of the dead.

However they are explained, her extrasensory talents have now brought her a small fortune. *The Eagle and the Rose* hit the bestseller list in 11 countries, and her new book, *Proud Spirit*, seems to be following close behind. The royalties have allowed her to quit the business of psychic consultation that, at \$200 an hour, had been her mainstay. Now, when she performs those services, she sometimes works for free. With such clairvoyance, though, one might wonder why she doesn't cash *Continued on page 198*

boyfriend, who lives three hours away, ends up in the intensive care unit. My mother did not want me to drive there to be by his side; she thought that something terrible would happen if I went. I had learned to listen to my mum because, quite simply, she was always right. In this case, however, my heart took over and I jumped into Buttercup, my bright yellow, slightly unreliable first car. Three hours later, I had to call my frantic mother to explain that while I was okay, I had crashed Buttercup into a ditch. My mother was right again.

Picture yourself in your early twenties; you are confident and independent. Now imagine yourself in a compromising position with a young man—one you really should not be in for reasons we won't go into right now. The phone rings. You're feeling a little jumpy, and this is an excuse to extract yourself from this complicated situation. You run to the phone, only to hear your mum tell you that she has a "strange" feeling about you and ask if everything is okay. You reassure her, putting down the phone to find your suitor looking at you oddly, perturbed that your psychic mother may have the hotline to his intentions. Determined not to let my mum interfere with my life, I assured the young man it was merely a coincidence that she had called at such an inopportune moment. At age 23 I still hadn't learned. Half an hour later, just as animal instincts overtook my young man's apprehensions, the phone rang again. Try as we did to ignore such an intrusion, it just wouldn't go away—the



Growing up, Samantha found an extended family in her mother's populous spiritual world.

phone continued to ring. He told me that if it was my mum, that was it, he was leaving. Of course it was, and he did. "Are you sure everything is okay?" my mum asked. "Because I really do have a strange feeling." Is it any wonder that the type of man I go for has to be persistent?

I know it appears that my childhood was bizarre. Quite frankly, it was. I cannot imagine, however, growing up with "normal" parents. I cannot imagine not being able to talk to the passersby who chat with my mum from "the other side." I cannot imagine not being able to turn for guidance to our extended family residing in the spiritual world. I cannot imagine not being able to ask advice of my mum and not being able to trust it.

My mum believes we learn by making mistakes, and she has the courage to let me do that. I blunder around in the dark, searching for answers. I wonder if I'll live happily ever after. I get frustrated that my mum very often knows but won't say. When my mum tells me that I'll be successful and that I need to write—she has been told by those in the spirit world that I have a golden pen—I have to take notice. What do you think? Is she right?

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