



# TEA & INTUITION

WENDY REYNOLDS



When I was a child, my grandmother would invite me to her kitchen table and prepare a pot of loose leaf tea. I sat in silence as she dimmed the lights, lit the candles, adjusted her scarf and poured the brew into my beautifully decorated cup.

She reminded me to think about my inner desires as she poured, and asked me to drink the tea with reverence and focus. The candles would flicker as I sipped; she told me this was

a sign that the spirits were with us. I drank with trepidation, mystified and excited by the unseen forces in the room.

Once the cup was empty, she advised me to turn it upside down and make three passes over my head, always in a circular motion and always with closed eyes, so as not to offend the spirits. Then I would set the cup facedown on the saucer and await the reading. It was always eerily correct.

My grandmother told me that I shared her gift, she could see it in the leaves.

“What is the gift?” I asked.

She told me the gift would reveal itself to me when I was ready, that I was too young to understand. “When you become a woman,



Layout by Chloe Martin. Artwork by Sarah McCracken.

then you will know. You will feel it in your bones,” was her standard reply.

When I was a teenager, my grandmother became ill and the readings stopped. The cancer destroyed her health and her ability to interpret the leaves. She passed away, and I distanced myself from the leaves, along with any other practice that reminded me of her mysterious gift.

The gift found me when I was working in a men’s maximum security prison. It was intuition, and it would keep me out of danger. I knew because I felt it in my bones, as my grandmother predicted. I was often surrounded by hundreds of inmates, many of whom had no effect on me, but every once in a while my gut would churn or my skin would prickle when I interacted with one. Some men made me icy with fear, a fear that made my bones ache. I could hear my grandmother’s voice in my head, and I knew her words were true.

During a particularly long night on the midnight shift at the prison, I was making my quarterly rounds when the icy feeling took over. An inmate had asked me a question about the television, a seemingly harmless query, but my body knew there was more to come. As I walked the dark corridor over and over again that night, I was filled with inexplicable terror each time I passed his cell. The gift was warning me, telling me to be alert. The inmate eventually tried to attack me; he was completely naked and had been waiting close to the bars in order to grab ahold of me and do his worst. Thanks to my gift, I was prepared. He missed, and I was able to call for help.

I ended that night with a cup of tea, paying reverence to my grandmother and the spirits with every sip. I believe in the power of tea and intuition, and in the gift from a mystical grandmother who read my tea leaves and saved my life.