

## Chapter 14

### Anxiety Disorder

I don't know why I'm so afraid to be left alone at night. Maybe childhood fears are haunting me. If I'm with someone or it's light outside, I can sleep, but never if I'm alone in the dark.

As shadows lurk and noises emerge out of nowhere, my heart begins beating uncontrollably, my respiration escalates as my eyes search the room for danger, but I can't see anyone.

"Come out, come out, wherever you are. I know you're there. I can feel you. What do you want from me? Just leave me alone." Oh my God, it's 4 a.m., and the sun doesn't come out until 6.

It's strange. I have always felt like something was going to kill me in my sleep or hurt me in the dark, but in the sunlight, I'm safe.

Why do I feel that way? It's so strange to me. I can't even sleep with the lights on, because in my mind I know it's dark outside. I can't see out, but this person can see in. I can hear breathing as I stare around the room, into the darkness watching the shadows move.

I started to feel strange. I had these pains that I had never experienced before, and I was becoming frightened of everything. I felt like there was someone out to get me. I anticipated someone blowing up my car. This thing was getting ready to dice me into little pieces. I felt someone lurking in the shadows, waiting for me to relax and close my eyes so they could slice my throat!

Over time, I started feeling pressure in my head, hot and cold flashes, dizzy spells. I didn't know what was wrong with me, I had never felt this way before.

I keep telling Linda that I didn't feel like myself anymore, but she reassured me that I was overreacting. I believed her. She was a nurse. But the symptoms got progressively worse, to the point where I was only eating, sleeping, smoking, drinking, and crying my life away. There was absolutely no more happiness in my life. I had suicide in the back of my mind constantly. My anxiety drained her, and she couldn't do anything to help me. I was sick. I wanted to control her instead of enjoying her and her love, I feared losing her all the time, and I think my fear made the outcome what it was. Everything changed once she became a nurse.

Linda: I want us to start over. We can live in separate apartments, but we can still date, and have sex.

Me: Are you out of your mind? Date after being together for two years? Whatever happened to I'm going to help you quit dancing after I graduate?

Linda: Whatever!

I never felt the same. I started to take interest in a woman at work named Pamela. She was from Brazil. She was so beautiful, so charming and all of the affection I had been craving I found in her. Once Linda saw that I had a new love interest, she wanted to fix the relationship, but it was too late.

I was standing at my locker and I couldn't catch my breath. I felt faint, and pressure in my head like never before. She called me by my stage name.

**Pamela: Shannon, what's wrong? Why are you just standing there?  
I grabbed both of her arms.**

**Me: Pamela, you've got to help me. I don't feel right. I need a doctor. Please help me.**

**Pamela: Yes. We'll leave now. Get dressed, and I'll tell the manager.**

**In a moment she was back, letting me lean on her shoulder and leading me out of the club and into her car. I cried uncontrollably all the way to the doctor's office. Once we got there, I was trembling so badly that I couldn't keep my composure. The receptionist took me to one of the back rooms so I could fill out my patient information in private.**

**The worst possible things were going through my mind. Maybe I have an untreatable disease. I must be dying. The doctor, finally came into the room to see me.**

**Doctor: Hi, Pamela. How have you been?**

**Pamela: Fine. This is my friend, Christine. She's not feeling well.**

**Me: I don't know what's wrong with me.**

**Doctor: How do you feel?**

**Me: I have pressure in my head, I'm having a hard time breathing.**

**Doctor: I'll be right back.**

**When he returned he had a pamphlet in his hand that said "Anxiety."**

**Doctor: You have anxiety. You're suffering from panic attacks.**

**Me: Is it curable?**

**Doctor: I'm going to prescribe you Xanax, which is a muscle relaxant. Here are a few to get you by while you get the prescription filled. You'll feel better right away. Read the pamphlet, and I'll see you next week for a follow up on your progress. The secretary in the front will bill you.**

**He handed me a box and patted me on the arm. Thank God for Pamela. This experience made me love her all the more. Linda moved out, and it took some time getting used to being alone. I couldn't make up my mind between giving Linda another chance or starting a new life with Pamela, but Pamela made up my mind for me. Pamela left me a message at work with the manager.**

**Ulue: Pamela went to New York with her boyfriend.**

**Me: What boyfriend? What are you talking about?**

**Ulue: She left!**

**Me: Did she say when she was coming back?**

**Ulue: No.**

**I didn't know what to do with myself. I told everybody at work that I didn't love Pamela anymore, but everybody knew I was lying. The Pain was written all over my face. I knew I had to try to forget her, because the reality was that she might never come back to me. I loved her so quickly and so much. I missed her with every fiber in my body. Every time I passed her locker, I could see her face in the mirror. As the days progressed, I missed Pamela more and more. I couldn't take it anymore. She was all I could think about. I could no longer concentrate on simple conversations. So instead of chit chat, I drank and drank, and I kept drinking until I could no longer hold a glass to my lips. A friend drove me home and helped me into my apartment. I drank so much that I felt as if I were going to pass out, so I walked over to the recliner. To my surprise, I fell all the way back into the chair, and I couldn't sit up. I felt nauseated. My friend had left. I was alone. I knew in a moment I was not only going to pass out, I was also going to vomit while reclined in this chair unconscious.**

**I've got to call 911, I thought, as I tried to grasp the phone, just barely out**

of reach.

What am I going to do? I'm going to die in this chair. As I sat there in the chair, I felt something break in my mind. Oh my God, what have I done to myself. Oh my God.

Me: God, I promise if you get me through the night, I'll never do this to myself again. Just get me through the night. I'll change. I promise I'll change. Please forgive me. In Jesus' name, amen.

And He did. I let myself drift off to sleep. If tragedy were to come, I didn't want to suffocate while awake. I didn't want to suffer the pain of not being able to breathe.

The next day when I finally opened my eyes, I felt like my brain was floating in Jack Daniel's. I had a bad headache that lasted the next four days, despite to the aspirin I was taking. Only time took the pain away. I have never felt the same after that night. Pamela finally came back that next week. I went to work, to make a new schedule, and she showed up to show off the new Chrysler convertible her boyfriend bought her. She walked up to me.

Pamela: Hi.

Me: Can I speak to you for a minute?

Pamela: Yes, outside.

I grabbed her hand and dragged her through the front door.

Me: What the hell is going on? Don't you know I love you? What were you thinking leaving town with someone else? What are we now, friends?

Pamela: I thought you didn't love me. You never told me you loved me.

What am I supposed to do, wait for you to decide whether it's going to be me or Linda? I can't share you anymore. What are you going to do, have sex with the both of us forever?

Me: I'm sorry. It's only you.

Pamela: I missed you.

Me: So what's up with this car, and this guy?

Pamela: I won't be with him anymore, but I'm not giving him back this car.

Me: Are you kidding? How much is this car?

Pamela: \$15,000.

Me: What?! This man would kill you.

Pamela: It was a gift.

Me: Bullshit. What did you promise him?

Pamela: Don't get mad. I thought it was over between us. I promised him that I would marry him.

Me: What? Are you out of your mind? Are you telling me had sex with him?

Pamela: Yes, but with a condom. I thought it was over.

Me: I've got to get out of here.

I got out of her car and went home. I could hear her calling after me, but I just kept walking. Minutes later, she was at my front door, pleading for forgiveness, while pawing at me.

Pamela: Kiss me, kiss me I missed you.

Without hesitation, I wrapped my arms around her. I missed her so much I could have forgiven anything. Pamela and I got an apartment together right away. We realized we belonged together. But the deeper our love became, the more Pamela didn't trust me. I felt smothered. Every time I spoke to someone, Pamela accused me of sleeping with them. She even told me she didn't want me speaking to my friends anymore. So I didn't.