

REGRESSION

By Albi Gorn

CAST OF CHARACTERS

CAMERON

CLAUDIA

DR. DARVI (can be either gender)

(A waiting room)

CAMERON: Nice office.

CLAUDIA: (*Indicating*) Those are pictures of some of his lives.

CAMERON: Oh. You can take pictures?

CLAUDIA: No, silly, those are pictures of the times he lived that he remembers. They're not photographs.

CAMERON: Right. Well, that one is.

CLAUDIA: Which one? Oh, yeah, well, that one.

CAMERON: That's the — he was on the Titanic?

CLAUDIA: Umm, I don't — I don't think so. I think he like built it or designed it or — I, I don't remember what he said.

CAMERON: You can remember what some Visigoth said to you in the Sixth Century and you can't remember what this guy told you last week?

CLAUDIA: See, Cameron, that's the problem we have. You just —

CAMERON: Okay, okay, sorry. I'll be serious.

CLAUDIA: This is important, Cameron.

CAMERON: I understand.

CLAUDIA: Before I take such a big step with my life —

CAMERON: I know, I know.

CLAUDIA: I need to be sure. (*Her cell phone buzzes. She answers it*)

Yes...why?...we can beat that...we can...Fletcher, we can beat that...then I'll go.

(*Covers phone; to CAMERON*) What are we doing this weekend?

CAMERON: Visiting your mother.

CLAUDIA: You'll have to go alone. I'm going to Cleveland. (*Back to phone*) Tell Inez to book me on the earliest flight tonight...right. (*Hangs up*) I need to be sure.

CAMERON: Right. (*Beat*) Nobody is ever really sure, you know, when they get married. I love you, Claudia. I'm sure of that.

CLAUDIA: I love you too, Cameron. Of course. This you. But there are other yous I want to know, that I need to know to make me sure. I've been burned so much.

CAMERON: By who?

CLAUDIA: You wouldn't know them.

CAMERON: Wait, you said you told me about everybody, Chris, Michael —

CLAUDIA: No, not this life. Other lives, I've been burned in other lives.

CAMERON: Oh, right.

CLAUDIA: That's why —

CAMERON: That's why we're here, right. (*Beat*) So we're talking some kind of reparations? Sorry, sorry, that was irresistible.

CLAUDIA: I have to tell you, Cameron, that kind of sarcastic humor is vaguely familiar to me. (*Reaching back in her mind*) I'm thinking Hung Dynasty.

CAMERON: Hung Dynasty? There was a Hung Dynasty?

CLAUDIA: That's the image I'm getting. Some sarcastic noodlemaker in the Hung Dynasty. (*Making a note*) I'll have to check this out with Darvi.

CAMERON: And what you're saying is if we can actually do this, if I can do this past life repression thing —

CLAUDIA: Regression.

CAMERON: Right, regression.

CLAUDIA: Forget about past lives; you're not going to be able to make it back to this morning unless you can drop that skepticism, Cameron. I'm telling you that right now.

CAMERON: Okay, okay. So if — *when* I do this past life regression, we're going to be checking out who I was — see, that's where I lost you, Claudia. What are you going to learn? What difference does it make who I was? Why aren't we focusing on who I am, who we are?

CLAUDIA: Because, Cameron, who you are is who you were. You're a continuum, just like I'm a continuum. If our continuums are going to — (*she looks for the right word*)

CAMERON: Continue?

CLAUDIA: No, not continue. Blend, amalgamate, integrate —

CAMERON: Marry?

CLAUDIA: No — converge. If we converge, our continuums are going to converge. If we understand where we come from, we'll understand where we're headed, whether we're really destined to travel on together, or whether there's that point, somewhere up the road, where our paths are going to diverge. I've had enough of that, god knows. I want to be sure.

CAMERON: So, this is a little like connect the dots. You start at the Hung Dynasty, go to the Toltec harvest ceremony, Visigoth fertility rites, Battle of Hastings, Omaha tribal center outside of what is now Peoria, posing in Milan for Gorgonzola —

CLAUDIA: His name wasn't Gorgonzola, it sounded like Gorgonzola.

CAMERON: Librarian in Basra, nurse in Crimea and extra on the set of Intolerance, we connect those dots and extend the line out, and that's where you're going.

CLAUDIA: Yes, in a way — and you get points for remembering all that — that's where I'm going and that's who I am. And you can trust that, Cameron. You can trust that because you understand where I'm coming from.

CAMERON: So to speak.

CLAUDIA: I need to trust you in that way. If I'm going to bear your sons —

CAMERON: Sons?

CLAUDIA: I always have sons. If I'm going to bear your sons, I want to know that you'll be there for me. Is that too much to ask?

CAMERON: No. Of course not. I just don't know if I can speak for all those other guys I was.

CLAUDIA: Cameron —

CAMERON: Claudia, believe me, I love you. I feel as though I've always loved you.

CLAUDIA: Well, we'll find out.

CAMERON: Despite all my skepticism, I'm here, aren't I?

CLAUDIA: Yes.

CAMERON: That, that and everything else I've done for you, how I've acted, what I've said, how I've loved you, and shown that love, that's what you should focus on. That night at the laundromat, finding your bra in my load, it was kismet, Claudia, destiny; we were meant to be, meant to be together, meant to be in love, meant to be a family. And whoever I was, if I was anyone, forget those guys. This is me now.

CLAUDIA: (*Intense beat*) What do you mean, forget those guys? What are you hiding?

CAMERON: Claudia.

CLAUDIA: Who are you trying to protect?

CAMERON: Claudia, I love you; why can't you hear that?

CLAUDIA: Oh, Cameron, it's so, so easy to say. You may even believe it. It may even be true. But can you fulfill the promise of those words, Cameron. That's what we're here to find out.

CAMERON: (*Big sigh*) Okay. I'm game. And do you know why, Claudia?

CLAUDIA: Why?

CAMERON: Because you're worth it. I've never known anyone quite like you, Claudia, not in this life, or any other life.

CLAUDIA: Thanks, honey.

DR. DARVI: (*Entering; chanting*) *To-na yo-ma kameelee; yo gee yo law so sweelee* —

CLAUDIA: (*Whispering to CAMERON*) He was a monk in 10th Century Kyoto.

DR. DARVI: (*Suddenly stopping and staring at CLAUDIA and CAMERON*) Where am I?

CLAUDIA: In 21st Century America, Dr. Darvi

DR. DARVI: (*Urgently*) When, precisely when?

CLAUDIA: (*Gives the current year*)

DR. DARVI: No, exactly when?

CLAUDIA: (*Gives the current month and day. DR. DARVI still stares at her intensely. She looks at her watch*) 3:42 p.m.

DR. DARVI: Ah. You must be my 3:30 appointment. Sorry, I'm late, so to speak. (*Suddenly wide-eyed and transported*) It was those words, the words of the King.

CLAUDIA: What king?

DR. DARVI: That chant of the King.

CAMERON: Give us a hint, French, English.

DR. DARVI: No, (*it comes to him*) American, yes, an American King.

CAMERON: You mean the president?

DR. DARVI: No. (*Beat*) Carole. (*Chanting*) *To-na yo-ma kameelee; yo gee yo law so sweelee* — (*he strains to recall the rest*)

CAMERON: (*Tentatively singing:*) *Tonight the light of love is in your eyes.*

DR. DARVI: That's it.

EVERYONE: *But will you love me* —

CAMERON AND CLAUDIA: — *tomor* —

DR. DARVI: (*Cutting them off*) Now, you must be Cameron, am I right?

CAMERON: Uh, yes.

DR. DARVI: Welcome. I am Dr. Darvi. Let me explain how we work.

CAMERON: Well, I don't think that's necessary. Claudia has gone over...(*he trails off under Dr. Darvi's stare*) Sorry.

DR. DARVI: I studied with Socrates, you know. (*To CLAUDIA*) Not that I was ever able to use anything I learned there, but it looks good on the resume. (*Back to CAMERON*) What you will do is focus a discrete part of your mind on what has just previously happened. You then focus on the act of having focused, and then on the act of having focused on just having focused. It's like stretching a rubber band from the present to the past. When it gets tight enough, you will get boomeranged into a past life. How far back we cannot say, but you will report to me what you see and hear, smell and feel and touch back there. And that's how we work. (*Darvi looks distracted*)

CAMERON: (*After a long pause*) So I'm —

DR. DARVI: Well, you'll just have to tell Tiberius we had to build the road to the south. I don't know how they ever got that big stone circle built in the first place, but no way we're gonna start moving it now.

CAMERON: Excuse me, I didn't —

DR. DARVI: I don't know how that imbecile ever got that contract. Now, to make it easier, I will give you an event to remember, to start you off.

CAMERON: You'll give me an event. I don't follow —

(DR. DARVI slaps CAMERON)

DR. DARVI: Now, try to keep that in mind, focus on it.

CAMERON: *(Suppressing anger)* Look, this —

DR. DARVI: You look decidedly unfocused. *(With some mystical hand waving)*
Focus, focus, focus, focus ...

(The anger subsides in CAMERON. He starts to focus)

DR. DARVI: Now focus on the focusing, focus on the focusing, focus on the focusing...

(CAMERON's body starts to stretch, as if pulling against a rubber band, and gets tighter and tighter)

DR. DARVI: That's good, that's very good — isn't it good, Claudia?

CLAUDIA: He's a quick learner.

DR. DARVI: Tighter, tighter, focus, focus.

(CAMERON snaps into the past)

CLAUDIA: Where is he?

DR. DARVI: Where are you, Cameron? What do you see?

CAMERON: A tent, a yurt —

CLAUDIA: A yurt?

DR. DARVI: A tent used by the nomads of Central Asia.

CAMERON: Sheep, black and white sheep. And a black horse with a white spot over its eye.

CLAUDIA: White Eye?

DR. DARVI: Go in the tent.

CLAUDIA: *(Breathless)* My horse, White Eye?

DR. DARVI: What do you see?

CAMERON: A jug. Some bowls. And a carpet.

DR. DARVI: Describe the carpet.

CAMERON: Yellow — no, amber and ochre and — wait, I smell something.

DR. DARVI: Yes.

CAMERON: A pungent, acrid smell.

CLAUDIA: Like sour milk.

CAMERON: Yes, like sour milk. Very sour. Like weeks old.

CLAUDIA: The four year old knocked over the pail.

DR. DARVI: You were there, Claudia?

CLAUDIA: Yes, yes, White Eye was our horse. We were Turks, I think, nomadic Turks.

CAMERON: Yes, yes, I think that's right.

CLAUDIA: That was our tent.

DR. DARVI: Go on, Cameron, what else, what else do you see?

CAMERON: *(Smiling lovingly at CLAUDIA)* I see a woman, a beautiful black-eyed woman, with a beauty mark just here *(points to cheek)* on her imperially high cheek bones. A woman whom I love and cherish so desperately. Yes, yes it's —

CLAUDIA: *(Slapping CAMERON)* That Ulla bitch that you left me for.

CAMERON: What?!!

CLAUDIA: It's bad enough that you two-timed me, but you had the balls to do it in our own tent?

CAMERON: Claudia, I—

CLAUDIA: Six brats, spilling the milk, torturing the horse, while you're gallivanting around with that trollop from the Glulu clan.

CAMERON: Now Claudia, I—

CLAUDIA: So humiliated. Couldn't show my face at the fire. Couldn't dance at the festival.

CAMERON: I came back.

CLAUDIA: After that whore was through with you.

CAMERON: Who told you that?

CLAUDIA: Oh, please. It was common knowledge.

CAMERON: See, you never really let me explain.

CLAUDIA: I think I'd had about enough of your excuses—

CAMERON: And you're not letting me explain now. But I'm going to. Yes, I did go off with her. No excuses there. But I couldn't—I couldn't—we couldn't—

DR. DARVI: Do it?

CAMERON: (*Sheepishly*) Right, do it.

DR. DARVI: (*Chuckling*) In how many lives have I had that problem.

CAMERON: And do you know why?

DR. DARVI: No, why? I could never—

CAMERON: Not you. (*To CLAUDIA*) Do you know why? Because all I could think of was you and the kids.

CLAUDIA: Really?

CAMERON: Really. I made a mistake. I tried to correct it.

CLAUDIA: I wouldn't take you back. Cameron, I—

CAMERON: I don't blame you. I never had anything after that. I threw it all away for a pretty face. And to live without the kids...(*CAMERON is beside himself*)

CLAUDIA: Cameron, I—I don't know what to say. I was so miserable without you. A life lost.

CAMERON: But now we've been given a second chance, Claudia. That's what this is telling us. To go back to where we jumped the track.

CLAUDIA: (*Beat*) I don't think I want six children, Cameron.

CAMERON: I don't mean—

CLAUDA: And you're a lawyer; certainly you can do better than a yurt and sheep.

CAMERON: Claudia, I don't literally mean go back. I mean we have a chance to do this again, and this time do it right. (*To Darvi*) Thanks, doc. You really showed us that what's happening between us, the love, has always been and will always be.

CLAUDIA: Uh, I don't know.

CAMERON: What? What? Claudia, we—

CLAUDIA: I mean one past life we shared.

DR. DARVI: If you can call that sharing.

CLAUDIA: Tell me about it.

CAMERON: Oh, good grief, Claudia. We knew each other in a past life, loved each other. What are the chances of that? Doesn't that tell you something?

CLAUDIA: Something. But not enough.

DR. DARVI: Maybe one more life. I think that might be very revealing.

CAMERON: Of what?

CLAUDIA: That's what we'll find out, Cameron. And besides, aren't you interested in this? I mean now that you've tasted one past life, don't you want to open up the floodgates?

CAMERON: Well, I— (*To Dr. Darvi*) You gonna slap me again?

DR. DARVI: That probably won't be necessary. Just think back on an event.

CAMERON: Okay. I don't — Okay, okay. Ummmmm ... got it.

DR. DARVI: Now focus, and focus —

(CAMERON goes through the stretching as before. He suddenly snaps into the past again)

DR. DARVI: Where are you?

CAMERON: I see a field. And I see white (*locating each "white" by pointing*) white, white, white.

DR. DARVI: Yankee Stadium?

CAMERON: Snow, a field of snow.

DR. DARVI: Yankee Stadium in February?

CAMERON: Snow everywhere. Just lots of snow.

CLAUDIA: Last February? No, that's this life.

CAMERON: Wait, I see...I see something...something...

CLAUDIA: White?

CAMERON: Yes, it's white, but it's on something gray. I see white on gray.

CLAUDIA: I hate minimalist art.

CAMERON: Wait; there's something in my hand. I stop to look at it.

DR. DARVI: And you don't look back

CAMERON: It's ivory. An ivory walrus but one tusk is carved — it bends the wrong way.

DR. DARVI: I always struggled with the detail.

CAMERON: This is all I'm taking with me. I walk toward — toward —

DR. DARVI: The sea, the gray sea.

CAMERON: I step on the, on the —

DR. DARVI: Ice floe, a white ice floe.

CAMERON: I wipe a frozen tear. I'm leaving.

DR. DARVI: Mommy!!! Don't go. (*DARVI embraces CAMERON*)

CAMERON: It's time.

DR. DARVI: No, no you're still too young.

CAMERON: There's no room.

DR. DARVI: As soon as it snows again I promise you, I'm building that guest room.

CAMERON: I'll be fine. I'll just float off into the sunset.

DR. DARVI: It doesn't really set this time of year, it sort of —

(CLAUDIA slaps DR. DARVI)

CLAUDIA: How could you do that to your own mother?

CAMERON: The cold will get me before the hunger.

CLAUDIA: I don't know you at all.

DR. DARVI: It's our way.

CAMERON: But I won't feel the cold, as long as I can remember...(*looks at imaginary walrus in his hand*).

CLAUDIA: Ugh. I mean, far be it from me to cast cultural aspersions.

DR. DARVI: We have twins, another on the way. I still wanted her to stay. But she knows what's best. She saw her own mother drift away, just like that.

CLAUDIA: Cameron.

CAMERON: Oh, look, the aurora borealis come to keep me company on my —

CLAUDIA: Cameron, come on, we're leaving.

CAMERON: So beaut —

CLAUDIA: Cameron!!! (*She raises her hand as if to slap him back to the present*)

CAMERON: Whoa, whoa, I'm here, I'm here. (*Shaking off the cobwebs*) Whew, that was amazing.

CLAUDIA: Come on, we're out of here.

CAMERON: What's wrong?

CLAUDIA: We have things to do.

CAMERON: What?

CLAUDIA: Like renting a hall.

CAMERON: Really? Claudia, really?

CLAUDIA: Really.

CAMERON: But I don't understand. You wanted to be able to trust me, and all you saw of my past lives was one infidelity and this Eskimo thing. From that you now trust me?

CLAUDIA: There are more important things in a relationship. I realize that now. Cameron, I have dreams, wonderful dreams of what our life together will be. Part of those dreams is my career at the agency. Part of those dreams is having a family.

CAMERON: And I share those dreams, Claudia. I want to see you happy, I want —

CLAUDIA: Cut the crap, Cameron. My kids need a devoted, stay at home mother. From what I've just seen, I know now I can trust you to do that, because it sure the hell ain't gonna be me. Come on, we can check out the Explorer's Club before I have to go back to my meeting. Bye, Doc.

CAMERON: Well, Claudia, of course I —

CLAUDIA: And when you see my mother this weekend, not a word about that Eskimo thing, you hear me?

CAMERON: (*As they're leaving*) Bye, Doc, and thanks.

DR. DARVI: (*Paying no attention, lost in another life*) Oh, yes, Mr. Booth, the president's box is right upstairs. And enjoy the play.

— end of play —