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## Stains In My Coffee Cup

Thursday, 21 July 2011 - by Robena Schaerf

I have Irish ancestors and was raised with not only a sense of the ridiculous but also a sense of superstition, story, and practical jokes. Oh, and a lot of beer. My mother read the leaves when I was young. She used real tea leaves and a big teapot — not those little ones — and no matter how you strained the liquid a few leaves always stayed in the cup. When you were finished drinking you'd turn the cup upside down on the saucer, turn the saucer handle three times clockwise, raise it, and then read the leaves. The pattern came out along with of course the Irish talent of embellishment.

As I grew older, I turned to coffee as my hot drink of choice. I notice patterns in the stains on my coffee mug. I brew the coffee and it filters so these are not grounds, just a residue of coffee combined with milk at the bottom, a stain or residue that dries as the coffee sits on the computer. I'll often see an animal, a familiar face, or the shape of a continent. I see the distinct map of Australia, and because my family lives there, I see them pick up the phone. There is always a reason for the call, or Mom was about to call you. You can call this coincidence if you like, that's fine with me. 😊

But that brings me to another subject. What is coincidence?

Do you believe in coincidence and synchronicity? Have you ever thought of someone you haven't seen or heard from in a long time and then the phone rings, and there you have a deep longing that you've never even told your best friend about, and events occur to bring it into your life. Have you ever thought if you hadn't done something, a never have been able to happen? Do you take those coincidences and use them as messages or guides that are coming to you from the universe?

Deepak Chopra's book, *The Spontaneous Fulfillment of Desire*, speaks of the infinite power of coincidence and making it work for you on a local level. Chopra's moments are glimpses of a place where everything happens at the same time

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synchronistically, where past, present, and future blend into one. When you parse the signs and figure out what the messages are you can benefit from them and make them work for you, thereby creating your own good luck.

In the last couple of weeks the map of Africa has appeared in my cup three times. What could that mean? I have no money slotted for travel. My current story is not about a ship set in the Mediterranean, and I've been thinking of taking a cruise if I can save some dollars. Oh... the Mediterranean Sea is above Africa? Well, there you go then. For me, I need to start saving.

So, what coincidences have influenced you?

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Comments (21)

Thursday, 21

*some kind of betty said:*

my Ken is a coy and complicated soul. When we first started intensively dating each other he was very happy to let me do the chasing. One day he was out for a walk in the house, and when I wasn't in he spent a good twenty minutes riding around the likely parts of Melbourne looking for me. He finally spotted me, parked himself down the street in my path and looked in the opposite direction.

He let me call out to him (very eagerly, of course) twice before he "noticed" me. It was a lovely, lovely coincidence. I do believe in making your own luck.

Thursday, 21

*German Chocolate Betty said:*

Well, in my case I have had (about every five years, as it turns out) phenomena that I call "the stars getting into alignment" for a lack of a better description. I feel a certain unrest, a feeling that the universe is moving and whirling. One day, I look up (metaphorically speaking) and there, suddenly, is a path leading before. Bam! A path shining on the water, the stars leading the way, with your favorite mental picture is...

A couple of times it's involved jobs, a couple of other times it's been

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relationships. Nothing that I could "see coming", but I have always followed even when to others it has often seemed as though I am absolutely out of my skull. Which I may be, but still...each time it has led to significant change (including, a couple of times, major geographic moves). Things haven't been easy, but every time it has led to something better.

Has never been wrong. Most of the time I have no idea what is going to come out of it and one of the scariest times I bet everything (job, home, everything I moved transatlantic and started over. With, quite literally, a wish and prayer and not much else. Simply because a series of coincidences (too complicated to explain here) aligned to lead me where I am today. EVERYONE thought I should be institutionalized, now they are all agreed, it was the right thing.

So I guess I have experienced several times in my life what Chopra means.

(Never got signs from my coffee cup though!)

Thursday, 21

*German Chocolate Betty said:*

Oh, yeah, this year is due to be another "year of change", and I do feel a sense of unrest and itchiness. Something's going to happen.

Maybe I'll find it in my coffee cup this year. O, wait, first I have to finish my coffee! Sluuuurppp! ☺

Thursday, 21

*Nancyf said:*

I agree Robena. I am a big believer in coincidence. Sometimes fate takes several shoves to get you to go in the right direction. I was thrown in with my current love many times and in many ways before we finally met. Our first meeting we never wanted to be apart.

You know when you have one of those really strong déjà vu moments where the picture is very clear. I often feel that I dream of a scene but I am certain I have "been here before". When that happens I often say to myself - I am on the right track, this is where I am supposed to be. It is very comforting.

Thursday, 21

*Kate George/Bodacious Betty said:*

I had those moments. When something presents itself to me I try not to  
When my husband had the choice of going to school in California (my home  
state) or Vermont I pushed for Vermont. I felt like it might be the only chance  
I have to experience the east coast.

Of course we're still here.

Thursday, 21 .

*Clever Betty said:*

Robena I love it that you read your coffee leavings! I have had things fall  
into place and make a path for me in the past. I've run into someone I  
I've seen in years after thinking about them. (In fact, there are certain people  
I prefer not to run into and I generally scramble to avoid thinking of them  
Mostly I just try to remain open and listening to whatever opportunities  
present for me. I don't think it's always appropriate to say yes, though. The  
challenge is figuring out when to say yes and when to say no.

Thursday, 21 .

*Jennifer R said:*

I am curious about this tea leaves thing. Not a tea drinker myself, but if  
I want to blog about this more I'd totally be interested.

Anyway, I had one this morning!!!!

There is a certain famous person that I am ah, drawn to. I really think I  
want to go to meet this person someday because of the interesting pileup of  
events that's happened about it. (I'm not saying who though out of sheer  
embarrassment. I'm embarrassed admitting this as is. So pardon my  
lack of specifics in this post?)

Anyhoo, I saw a picture of them the other night with a certain logo on it  
The logo related to an issue I had talked to my shrink about before. So  
this morning I was writing her e-mail and at the bottom of it I said, "oh, hey,  
funny, I found a picture of them wearing this," and sent it on.

Then I left the house to walk to work. And I found an object on the ground

related to their job... with a similar logo on it. I promptly took a picture and sent that to my shrink too 😊

Thursday, 21 .

*German Chocolate Betty said:*

Yeah, sometimes the Universe just thumps you on the head with it... Good luck!

Thursday, 21 .

*Kimberly/Rock Star Betty said:*

I do believe in such things, but trusting them ... That's a different matter. "Control freak" is a pretty tame description of me. I fear that I have ignored such signs and messages so often that I've kind of stopped getting them. Thanks for this reminder to get out of my own way sometimes. I love how the Betties are to follow those nudges and whispers.

Thursday, 21 .

*Robena Grant said:*

One of my recent coincidences happened when I attended a conference for general writers that attracts only a handful of romance authors. I was undecided and then learned Susan Wiggs would be the keynote speaker. I never met Susan but had read some of her books. I was thrilled that that conference was finally recognizing romance authors. So I signed up. The second night there was a cocktail hour with open seating. I wanted to meet Susan but felt shy. Something compelled me to walk over to her table and say how much I'd loved her last book. She asked where I was sitting, grabbed my drink, and joined me. ME! Can you believe she'd heard my muted Australian accent? But wait for it...she has a sister who married an Aussie...and guess what, they live in a tiny town of a few thousand, in the Northern Territory where my brother lives. We exchanged emails and chatted all night.

Thursday, 21 .

*DivaBetty said:*

Not only do I adore this post, but it also gave me the "I had some dreary clouds in my coffee" song in my head (something Carly Simon, I did it for my class all the time..)

Yes I believe in coincidence but I think it's a form of pattern visibility--w  
glimpse the design and go Oh Yeah Cool. Just my theory.  
PS Painting the mural today in the nursery pics on my blog.

Thursday, 21 .

*BettyFokker said:*

I believe in coincidence and luck and serendipity and fate and free-will.

Of course, I'm Irish so I have a certain mental flexibility that is inherent  
ilk. 😊

Thursday, 21 .

*Sunshine Betty said:*

I do believe in synchronicity, aka coincidence, where things come toge  
Unfortunately, I don't seem to pick up subtle signals at all and need to l  
things placed right in front of my face for me to see them, with maybe a  
tap on the noggin so that I see them. I've been desperately wishing for  
signs like crazy these days.

I, too, would love a post on reading tea leaves or coffee leftovers!

Thursday, 21 .

*Atomic Betty said:*

I do like the idea, and there were enough times when the right person c  
information wandered along at just the right moment that it all feels righ  
even better when I'd been dragging my feet about something and it's ju  
when a better opportunity presents itself. I do sometimes wish it were a  
more predictable, like you could say 'hey world, I don't know what I'm  
supposed to do about this' and a note would come along and explain. ♪  
Yeah, I probably wouldn't really do any better under that system.

FGBVs and keep cool everyBetty!

Thursday, 21 .

*Nan/DragonflyBetty said:*

Great post, Robena! I am an Irish lass, as well, and not only believe in  
coincidence and synchronicity, but see it action in my life all the time. ♪

connection thing is that if I dream of someone more than twice in a week, I know I'm supposed to contact them. When I do, invariably they'll say, "I was just thinking of you" or "I was just remembering a time when we..." or even "How did you know I need to talk to you?"

I'm Irish--I just knew... 😊

Thursday, 21 September 2011 10:00 AM

*Megan/Five Boy Betty said:*

I do believe that if we open our minds, or hearts, we can listen for direction to the right "path." It's hard to get all the distractions out of the way, though, so I really tune in.

A personal, happy, example of synchronicity, I guess, is the path that brought me here to the Bettyverse. The short version is this: Jennifer Crusie is a romance writer I had read as an adult. Reading her novels made me want to write. I said I wanted to be serious about writing. My mother got me a good agent. I found out about RWA. I joined and told my friend, who is a Betty, she said I should become a Cherry and a Betty, because I would meet people like me, and learn a lot. I did. I went to one conference, roomed with another awesome Betty (hi Delia!), and met Lani! I went to New York, roomed with another fabulous Betty (hi Deborah!), and met Jenny!

Even more significant than the fangirl thrill of meeting them was the feeling I had made one decision, the right decision, and good things had come from it. I'm writing, I'm learning, and I've made friends who understand what I'm trying to accomplish. I marvel at how it's all unfolded thus far, and look forward to where I'll go next!

Thursday, 21 September 2011 10:00 AM

*Mimi said:*

Great post Robena! I too am Irish and a firm believer in synchronicity. I'm amazed when I think of the angels who have shown up in my life when I've needed them, not to mention the opportunities they often brought with them. Lately I have been wrapped up in the many details of life, and I'm afraid of forgetting to be aware of the signposts. Thanks for the reminder.

Oh, and I checked my dried coffee cup this morning. It made me think :  
chocolate. I must be doing something wrong,

Thursday, 21 .

*Mary Stella said:*

Diva Betty said:

"I had some dreams they were clouds in my coffee" song in my head  
(something Carly Simon, idk I play it for my class all the time..)"

That's from You're So Vain.

Robena, I loved this post although I'll freely admit I know nothing about  
tea leaves or coffee leavings. Still, there's something cool about looking  
anything and finding a clue.

I can't think of a recent coincidence or synchronicity thing, so I'll go bac  
October 1999. I still lived in Jersey but a friend and I came to the house  
Keys for the annual Fantasy Fest. As usual, I went to DRC to see the c  
Of all the years I'd visited, this time I happened to chat with a volunteer

That lead me to ask more about the volunteer program which promptec  
pick up an application before I left. I'd never had a set of circumstances  
where I could pick up and go to the Keys for a couple of months. By th  
however, we had the Internet. I had a laptop. I was running my own fre  
creative writing business so I wasn't limited by 9 to 5 hours in an office.

So, I volunteered the following winter. That set me on the path to get m  
more involved and, eventually, the decision to move here.

What if I'd never met that volunteer on that day in October 1999?

Thursday, 21 .

*Collegiate Betty said:*

I'm not sure about fate. I like believing it's real, but I can't quite justify th  
to myself. Go figure: I can believe in God, but I'm stuck on fate.

I do believe in noticing things though. When I take time to notice what's  
me, I normally find that one last little detail I need to support the choice

want to make. When I flew in to D.C. to visit the colleges I'd gotten into terrified. I wanted to leave home, I knew I did, but it was strange and so When we got off the plane we passed an older couple, him hugging her everything he had once she stepped into the waiting area, and that call People are the same everywhere, which means there's love when you it. Sounds obvious, but it was my sign that things would be all right. It v have been all right if I hadn't noticed that couple, but it would have take longer to believe it. I guess that's what I think signs do: give you permis cut the corners of caution and logic and head straight to the thing you t

Friday, 22 .

*Kate George/Bodacious Betty said:*

Hey Fokker - I have a certain mental flexibility too. It comes if very han allows me to agree with what every one says so I never have to form a opinion of my own... (kidding, Betties. I can distinctly remember forming opinion once. I believe it had to do with ice cream...)

Friday, 22 .

*Braless Betty said:*

I not only believe in this, I rely on this. Example: I'm sitting in a major ai flying standby trying to make it onto a connecting flight but there are or seats and there are 23, yes twenty three people vying for those seats. connection is going to Orlando so there are families all over the place. in and the attendant gives me the not a snowballs chance in hell look. I on my sister's airline privileges so I am dead last on the get on board li down and say a silent prayer to my mothers. First to mine and ask her Next prayer is to my future husband's mother. I ask her to help. Althou have only spent an hour and a half in my future husbands company six previous, I am on my way to spend 5 days with him for his birthday anc traveling over 4,000 miles to do it. Over the next hour the airline attend the 23 passengers over one by one. The first group is of six, they don't leave anyone behind so they decline. Next I see a businessman and it he takes a seat. Next is a couple and they appear to get seats. Down to seats and 14 people left. A dad and his daughter approach the counter thinking I am pretty much shit out of luck. I'll have to sleep in the airpor again tomorrow leaving me only with 4 days to spend with my long dist boyfriend of six months for which we have not spent more than the hou half of time together when we first met. Dad and daughter spend quite

time discussing, she's never flown before and the last two seats are no together. They finally make a decision and they decline them. What are chances there are no more couples or single people left travelling but r None! The attendant finishes going through the rest of the list, stops, th smiles and looks up at me, I'm calmly sitting there smiling back at him. and I approach the counter and he says, "I've seen stranger things, but very often, you shouldn't have made this flight. Coincidence? I think no Certain things are meant to be and the Universe will see to it. With the mothers, of course.

Thanks for the post Robena!

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