

The Sacred Silk Thread

“Do you see that?”

“See what?”

“*That*,” I said, pointing to a fine white silky thread in the corner, where the baseboards meet. It was sticking straight out about 6 inches. I could swear it had not been there before, ever. I’d owned this home for eight years. The house was regularly cleaned; vacuumed, dusted, etc. by a friendly woman named Linda who always brought mini milk bones for the dogs. What the hell was it?

“That? Looks like lint, or a strand from one of the dogs’ toys.” My friend Erin went back to reading her book.

But it was weird, really weird. Not strange because a random piece of thread was sticking straight out of a corner of my living room, but strange in the sense that noticing it gave me an odd feeling. Like when light plays a trick on your eyes, and you think you see a figure in a distant shadow but then it becomes clear it was only an illusion. In the flash moment between though, anything is possible; a mysterious figure has materialized, a door to another dimension has opened, the cosmos shifted to reveal all you ever believed was incorrect. That’s how I felt the moment I saw this white thread out of the corner of my eye.

I got up and walked over to examine it, but just then the dogs came racing in from another room, yapping and nipping at each other, playing “I took your toy now chase me!” In their furry fury they ran past the corner I was headed toward and broke my line of vision. When they had passed, the thread was gone. Since I was up, I wandered into my wife’s office and kissed her on the cheek. She said, “I’m almost done,” not looking away from her computer screen. My wife works from home, and that day she was working overtime, while Erin and I waited contentedly. We were all going to the movies that afternoon.

Cindy is my darling wife whom I adore, and Erin is my best friend in the whole world. Together they are two halves of the very best whole of me. Each has brought me, in their own way, a sense of connectedness that I searched for my whole life. Knowing they are both permanent fixtures elicits a profound sense of peace within me. My wife and I have been together for a decade, each passing year more rewarding than the last. Erin and I actually haven't known each other that long, so it may seem curious to some that I would say she's my best friend in the whole world. Yet from the day we met I had known this; I had *felt* it deep in my heart.

Both Erin and I and Cindy and I had actually spent a fair amount of time discussing this phenomenon in the beginning. Still, at some point it became laborious, as there was no logical explanation to be found. It sufficed to say that we found each other at the right time, we each needed a close friend, and by reason of geographical changes we had both recently left whatever friendships we had known behind in some other state. All three of us believe in fate, so we just chalked it up to that. Cindy does not share my incessant need for connection with another, but she understands this is something I have, and always encourages me to explore new friendships to see what they become. There is still a scared little girl that resides within me, and that girl wants (needs?) a best friend.

I returned to the couch and picked up my PlayStation controller. We could do this, Erin and me. She read her book while I played my game (with the volume turned down). A sign of our comfort, we could be quiet with one another. The dogs had worn themselves out and I saw that Ruby, our tiny Chihuahua-Dachshund mix, had retreated to Erin's lap for absentminded belly rubs while she continued to read. Just as I was about to step through a doorway in my game into another world, I saw that the thread had returned. It was thicker and longer now, a little over a foot, as if to make itself more noticeable.

"Erin," I said, with just the slightest timbre of alarm in my voice. Mid-pet she looked up, over at my face, then followed my gaze to the thread.

“What the fuck,” she whispered, barely audible.

Cindy emerged from her office and said, “I’m sorry guys, can we go to the later showing? What I’m doing is taking longer than I thought.” Then she saw us both staring at the corner. She looked too, and said, “What is that?”

“We don’t know,” Erin and I both said at exactly the same moment, in exactly the same cadence of reserved fearfulness.

“Well did you touch it?”

Again, a simultaneous, “No.”

“Huh.” With that my wife turned abruptly and went back into her office. This is Cindy’s way, she is typically unaffected by the strange or sudden, the unexpected or the shocking. She rolls through life with an ease of which I’ve always been envious.

Erin got up and placed Ruby gently on the couch. She took two steps toward the thread. Then three steps...four, and then crouched down to get a better look at it. I watched as if in slow motion as she reached out a hand toward the thread. I bolted out of my couch cushion with the force of an ejector seat, yelling, “For god’s sake don’t fucking to---!” but I was too late. Just as she closed her fingers around it, I heard a roaring sound and watched helplessly as a giant, swirling, multi-colored hole opened up in my living room wall. For a split second, all I could think was to wonder how was it possible such an enormous upheaval did not draw the attention of either my wife or our dogs? The ground shook violently, and I lurched forward, tumbled over my ottoman, and before I hit the floor I reached out and miraculously grabbed a hold of Erin’s hand.

When I opened my eyes, it was pitch black and absolutely silent, the kind of silence so loud you think you’ve gone deaf. I did a sort of mental and physical scan: did I have all my limbs? Check. Was I still me? Check. Was I in any pain? No. Was I thinking clearly? Yes. Was I dead? Unknown. I didn’t feel dead. I felt like my own physical self and I could feel myself with my hands, could I do that if I were dead?

“Kelly. Kel. Is that you?”

“Erin?”

“I can’t see a fucking thing.”

“Uh, me neither,” I said with totally unchecked sarcasm.

“Oh, shut up.” I could hear her walking toward me; at least I thought it was toward me. I took a few steps toward where I thought she was, saying, “I’ll keep talking so you can find m--” and before I could finish, we collided. An enormous spotlight lit up above us. For two seconds we blinked at each other then heard a sound like rushing water; really fast, really close rushing water. I yelled, “Hold onto me!” and grabbed her around the waist as we were washed away.

The force of the rushing water, or whatever it was, could have been celestial liquid star stuff for all I knew, was too strong and despite our best efforts pulled us apart. I was tumbling head over ass in the stuff, like when a wave much stronger than you knocks you over in the ocean. I wholly expected to not be able to breathe, but I could. I expected to be hurt when I landed wherever I was rushing to, but I wasn’t. Suddenly I was in a room of sorts, but the ceiling, floor, and walls were all made of some type of gelatinous pink and red substance with what looked like veins spider webbing all throughout. I heard a sort of *thwoop* sucking sound and suddenly Erin dropped through the ceiling and was standing beside me. When she gained her footing, she grabbed me and said, “Holy fuck it looks like we’re inside a wo--” but I didn’t get that last part because just then the rushing liquid flooded in again. I thought she said womb but couldn’t be sure, and now we were separated again.

Then the liquid or universe juice or whatever the fuck it was pushed me up and outward onto a cold hard frost-bitten ground. Seconds later, another *thwoop* and there was Erin. At least we kept showing up together in the same place, I thought. Whatever was happening it was happening to us both. “Look.” A voice that wasn’t one of ours issued this command. We both scanned the horizon until we saw two women in a field, picking or planting or some other work task. They had similar features, like sisters. They were not talking, only working. We began to

walk towards them, but then the now familiar sound of the rushing water arose again.

Helplessly, Erin and I looked at each other as if to say, “OK, I guess this shit is just going to keep happening.”

By the third or fourth liquid-rushing-traveling-depositing whatever, we were used to it. Get swept up in wave, deposited in a new location, look around to find the people we’re supposed to see, repeat. Never were we somewhere long enough to actually talk to one another. I don’t think we were supposed to. Each location and pair of people were different. Sometimes they were sisters, other times mothers and daughters, fellow warrior women, workers, spinsters, childhood friends. We went from barren deserts to European castles to boggy Scandinavian marshlands to American battlefields. Somehow, despite the frenetic pace at which these events were happening, one truth was abundantly clear: the two people were always us.

Eventually we were brought back to the pink-red veiny womb room for about a minute, and then the pitch black where we had begun. “Is it over?” Erin asked. I replied, “I fucking hope so.” We sat down and held hands and waited to see what was going to happen next.

We heard footsteps. Then we saw a golden light start as a pinprick in the darkness that slowly grew to a giant orb about 20 feet away. From this giant ball of golden light emerged what I could only assume was some kind of spiritual or supernatural (or both) being. She was blindingly beautiful, in long, flowing silver robes. On her head was a crown that came together in the front in a gold crescent moon shape. When she reached us she bent down and kissed each of our heads.

She straightened up and said, “My name is Anapel. I have also been known as Arianrhod, Isis, Kostroma, Çatalhöyük, Mother Goddess, and the Queen of Heaven, among other names.” Erin and I looked at each other and shrugged, said nothing, and went back to staring at her. I could not believe I was not more afraid, and Erin didn’t seem afraid either.

The figure continued, "I have brought you to this place to answer the deep burning question each of you have been asking. The places I've shown you are all the lives your souls have lived together."

"What's that now?" Erin blurted out in total disbelief. I laughed. The goddess ignored this exchange. "You see, not all souls live more than one life. To be honest, it is a completely random selection of the celestial spheres. It's like you in the material realm call....winning the lottery." I said nothing but thought, "Seriously? It's totally arbitrary?" Erin nudged me; she knew I was thinking rather than paying attention. "How many were there?" I asked.

"Twelve."

"Is that a lot?" I ventured.

"Not my department."

"Will we have more?" Erin asked.

"I cannot say." So, the Queen of Heaven's only job was to show us the lives, and no other information was available. To me this seemed like poor management. "We govern in ways you cannot understand," she said. Apparently mind reading was in a celestial being's wheelhouse.

"What happens now?" I asked. She pointed to a door that had materialized inside the golden globe from which she had emerged. Erin and I exchanged a quizzical look. Then we looked back at the angel/goddess/spirit/whatever. It became apparent that no further instructions were forthcoming. We got up and started walking toward the golden light. We both looked back at the same moment, and Anapel had vanished.

We stood silently in front of the door. "Are you going to open it?" I asked.

"I'm not gonna open it, *you* open it."

"Are you sure we *should* open it?"

"Uh, what are we going to do? Stay here? Wherever the fuck *here* is?"

I put one hand on the doorknob. I took Erin's hand with the other. "Don't let go," I said, and opened the door to a blinding white light.

When I could see again, I was in my patio deck chair, smoking a cigarette. Erin was in another patio chair, also smoking a cigarette. I felt like I had just woken from a long nap. I looked around, baffled. There was not a giant hole in my living room wall. The earth and my home and the forest outside my door looked exactly the same as they had an hour ago. Or five minutes ago. Or a day ago. I had no concept of how long our journey had lasted. I looked at Erin. She crushed out her cigarette and came over and hugged me. Neither of us said a word when Cindy emerged from the back door and said, "I wondered where you guys went. Are you ready to go to the movies?"