

## A Dream within a Dream

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Katy awoke, it was the same time of morning, around 3:33 a.m. She sat in bed, sweating her breathing was rapid. She had had that same dream, a sort of nightmare, enough to make the hair on the back of your neck stand up. It was like one of those stories you'd heard in Sunday school from the fire and brimstone preacher. *Maybe that's where these dreams came from, repressed memories of my childhood listening to Sunday school stories.*

She looked at the clock and decided she had better try and go back to sleep; she had a major exam in Biology class that morning, but she could not shake the images from her mind. The outdoor classroom, she was there with her college classmates sitting in their desks all in a row; the loud noise and the cyclone that pulled them up into the air and the feeling of free falling but in the opposite direction. She felt everything in her dream; the wind as it rushed by her, being uprooted from her desk by the vacuum of air, ascending into the sky, beyond the clouds. She heard the loud boom just before it all happened, as if she were awake. She decided to write about it before trying to go back to sleep, besides, she only needed to be able to catch a few more hours of peaceful rest before she had to get up and attend classes that day.

Finally, a couple of hours later, she drifted into that slow pulsation of sleep.

Awakened with a jolt, "Oh no, I'm going to be late for class again!" Katy staggered out of bed, freshened up, threw on her clothes, grabbed her books and a sugary breakfast treat from the pantry, and rushed off to class. She arrived with two minutes to spare, and received a glaring look from her Biology professor to boot. She made it through the exam, but wondered if she passed. She knew she shouldn't have stayed up writing after having that dream. Katy couldn't help it; she loved writing creatively, especially when something as significant as a dream

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inspired her to do so. She often skipped her studies to write poems or read literature. Her favorite form of literature was anything by Shakespeare. That's why she was a whiz at her English classes, but her other subjects lacked academic accomplishment. She had chosen to be an English major with a concentration in creative writing, simply because she loved it. Everyone, including her parents, said it wouldn't amount her to much success. "Prove them wrong" was her motto in life; besides, she didn't desire success in the traditional sense.

Katy accepted that she was an idealist and a dreamer. She'd always seen the world in the most colorful ways. She did not believe life was to be lived like a hamster on a wheel, waking up to the same scenario, hoping for a different outcome. Katy believed in directing her own destiny.

She couldn't stand the status quo. She loathed greedy, selfish, amoral people. She hated to see homelessness, sickness, and discrimination in the world. Simply because of these things, she had vowed to never watch TV again. The news headlines and the same predictable shows with all of their superficiality, she could no longer digest. Katy had often thought if she could but change the world, she would.

Her mother and aunt had died of cancer when she was in her teens, and that was something she could not grasp. She would never forgive this "God" she was taught about in Sunday school. She had turned her back on him long ago. Instead she now turned to "The Great Mystery" of the universe for understanding. She had often thought there was some intelligence in the cosmos, but what that was, she did not know. She had often wondered why it did not correct the wrongs in the world.

It was finally 4:00 p.m. "Time for my boring math class," Katy said aloud hoping no one heard her. It wouldn't be boring to someone who was a math enthusiast; Katy was not. She made

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her way from class to class that day as she usually did. This was her last class of the day, and she often dreaded it.

“The square root of.....” said the professor.

Katy had begun to feel drowsy. She didn’t get much sleep that night before because of that awful nightmare. It was like some sort of apocalyptic, rapture like dream that she couldn’t make sense of. She nodded off occasionally, but tried to hold her eyes open and pay attention.

Abruptly, the professor said, “Let’s take the class outside; I need to prove a point to all of you about mathematics through the eyes of nature.”

As they made their way outside onto the lawn, Katy saw classroom chairs. Looking very puzzled, she and her classmates sat down and began to take notes as the professor lectured about math and how it relates to nature.

All of a sudden, a loud noise reverberated into the air. It sounded like a car’s tailpipe had backfired or like a gunshot went off in the distance. *There is something oddly familiar about this.* All of the students, including Katy, looked up as if the noise came from above. A cyclone of air, like a tornado loomed, then it hovered and engulfed all of them as they were extracted out of their seats up into the whirlwind. Katy could feel herself being lifted up into the air, into the vacuum of the wind, beyond the clouds; then silence...

Katy opened her eyes. Looking around nervously she tried to figure out where she was. She then began to notice familiar faces of those whom she knew long ago. She saw her mother, her grandmother, her aunt, her grandfather, her poodle Brandy, her cats Frisky and Scooter. *How can this be?*

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“You’re in the *Further*.”

“The what?” and “Who are you?”

An old, thin woman standing across from Katy with long, dark hair responded, “You are in a place called the *Further*. I am just a passenger here; don’t know why or for how long. I can’t even tell you how long I have been here or where I am going from here. For all I know, this could be it.”

Katy was bewildered and a little bit frightened. She stood there as she watched her loved ones from times past as they laughed and talked with one another. They had all passed away at some point in Katy’s life, and she now looked at them as if they were alive on a movie screen in front of her. She saw her mother, young and beautiful, not ravaged by liver disease. She saw her aunt, healthy and glowing, not plagued by lung cancer as she was at the end of her life on earth. She saw her pets that had passed on, they were all playing together in harmony. She could not comprehend what was taking place.

“Come with me,” said a voice behind her.

She looked back but did not see anyone. Katy obeyed, out of curiosity, and followed the voice. She was led into a room adorned all in white. Nothing was of any color in that room and everything in the room appeared to be hovering above the floor; if you could even call it a floor. Katy seemed to be standing on clouds. She asked, “Where am I?” “What do you want?”

“You are in a place where dreams come true, where life is altered, where you decide what changes need to be made on earth.”

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Katy didn't say a word; she didn't even move a muscle. She was terrified that if this were true, one wrong move or one wrong word could have grave consequences on earth.

"It's alright, you have the opportunity to make amends, make changes, and set the course of earth and all of humanity towards a better life. I see the destruction of the land, the people, the trees, the animals. I wish to set things right, through you Katy."

She still did not say a word. She simply looked around, darting her eyes from one side of the room to the other, listening to the voice as it spoke.

She often had things on her heart that she wrote about, and wished she could make different in the world. She finally decided to speak.

"So I can set things right?"

"Yes."

"Okay, if that's true then here is what needs to be reformed: The end of racism and prejudice, equal pay and opportunity for meaningful work for all, no more taxes, no more corporate greed that destroys the ecosystem and socioeconomic system. Return the Native Peoples to their land and let us live in harmony with one another, end child abuse and the exploitation of women. No more disrespect of the elderly, no more homelessness, no more deadly diseases, and a clean planet free from pollution. All should be equal to each other as human beings, with equal access to the daily necessities of life."

"You have said it well. So shall it be according to you, Katy."

Alarm clock sounded, "Oh no, not again!" Katy was going to be rushed to make her Biology class again by the skin of her teeth. She hurried out of her house in the usual manner;

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quickly dressed, grabbed a snack, and sped all the way to the university campus. She ran down the corridor to her class.

“You barely made it again,” says her professor, looking quite perturbed.

Katy simply grinned and took her seat. When class was over she made her way outside, and noticed that there was a group of people sitting there of all races and ethnicities talking with one another about their culture. They seemed to have camaraderie about them. She also noticed the air smelled fresh, and the sky looked exceptionally blue that day.

Her cell phone rang, she looked down and the caller’s name that appeared on the screen read, “Mom.” *What?* Katy’s heart began to race. She rushed to her car and drove to what would have been her mother’s home. To her surprise, her mother’s car was there. Her heart began to pound, heavier with each step she took towards the front door. She knocked, the door opened, and there in the foyer stood her mother. “Mom!” she screamed. Katy grabbed her mother and began to cry incessantly.

“Katy, what’s wrong with you?” said her mother. “You act as if you haven’t seen me in years.”

Shaken, Katy shuffled nervously, then replied “I haven’t mom, you’ve been dead for fourteen years.”

“What are you talking about?” her mother said, looking bewildered.

“Mom, you died of liver failure fourteen years ago.”

“I don’t know what you are talking about Katy and you are beginning to scare me.”

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“I don’t care what wonderful, mysterious, extraordinary world I am in; I am just glad to have you back in my life,” Katy said with elation.

Katy and her mother took a walk as they reminisced about life and times past. They talked about Katy’s aunt, who was alive as well, and all of the things that were going on in Katy’s life at the present. She was even able to play with her pets, all of which had at one time been deceased.

At the end of the day when Katy returned home, she lay in bed and thought about her dream. She wondered if she were in a dream world or the real world. She wondered how was it that her dream allowed her to go into another realm and change world events. She could not make sense of it all. She wondered if what happened in Math class was a dream or real.

*Am I in a dream within a dream?* She didn’t care, all she knew was that she was glad to have her mother, her pets, and loved ones alive again. She was glad to have a pollution free world, and a world where different ethnicities could live in harmony.

The headline that next day on the internet news reported: “Unemployment rate 0% and homelessness eradicated.” Racial harmony abounded, wars and discrimination ceased from that day forward, and the Native People’s returned to their homeland. Katy wondered to herself with childlike excitement, *if this is a dream within a dream, I wish to never wake up.*