

5. PLEASANT DREAMS

She was trying to balance herself. She was only inches from the edge of the precipice. She checked a certain fall and worked to bring herself upright, but she could still feel the pull of long drop. She looked down, all the way down. And then she shook her head. Her pose was completely erect, but she still hadn't completely set herself. She tried to spread the weight evenly on both legs. But her center of gravity tended towards the precipitate descent.

It became obvious to her that her instability was not due only to her imbalance. She was struggling with someone on the ridge. Her feet were planted on the ledge of the rocks. She pushed in the opposite direction away from the drop. This time she couldn't resist the brute force. Both legs held together on the hard surface, and then they were pulled from under her. She scraped the side of the rock as she felt her feet come loose. She started to go down.

She tried to break her fall. Tried to drag her feet along the ground. She couldn't stop herself. She somersaulted into the air her legs were catapulted over her head. She couldn't catch herself. She was hurtling straight down, headfirst.

She could feel her stomach churning. Her whole body shook in the descent. The ground was coming up into her. Her heart was racing. She watched the trees below. They were like knives ready to slice her through. She tried to regain composure. What could she do? Everything was happening too fast, too fast. She was about to hit. She gasped.

She woke up. She was sweating. Her heart was pounding. The blood had rushed to her head. She tried to catch herself.

She lay still for a few minutes. She was sure that she had injured herself. She was afraid to look. Only after about ten minutes did the effects of sleep seem to wear off. Even then, she slide the covers off slowly. What had happened?

She opened her eyes. Nothing was wrong. She still felt a stiffness. It made her think that she really had hurt herself. In fact, it was nothing. She was unscathed.

Only a deep breath could bring her back to reality. Her relief was enormous. She wanted to make sense of the dream. It had all the earmarks of something that actually happened. She went over the details in her mind.

She had fallen from an enormous heights. But it was not by her own doing. Someone had been up there with her. She tried to get an image of that face. That same anonymity continued to haunt her. It crept inside as she had no recollection of her own past. The big blank.

She had wrestled on the that hill. She wanted to escape. But the other person had the upper hand. Perhaps, she had been surprised. Her only escape may have been to fall. But she wasn't prepared to go down like that. She didn't have a rope. She was simply pushed into midair. Once she had been pushed off the cliff, there was really no hope for her. That was the message of the dream. That she ended up being completely helpless. It started out with an attacker. But she was finally undone by her surroundings.

What precaution could she have taken. She could have been more vigilant. Perhaps staked out an escape route. She wondered if the cliff was familiar to her. It didn't evoke a memory. All that she was left with was the fear.

Even though she was all right, she was slow to get up from the bed. It was the same feeling when she thought that a man was in her room. What if someone was hiding and waiting

for her? She was already living a nightmare. The dream only reinforced that feeling.

Lynette was downstairs with breakfast ready.

“I heard you upstairs moving.”

“I was trying to scream. I had the worst nightmare. I was falling from a cliff. Some guy had pushed me over.”

“It sounds almost real. Are you sure that it didn’t really happen?”

“If it had happened, I’d be dead. You know one of those dreams where you wake up before you hit the ground.”

“Maybe something broke your fall.”

“I still don’t think it was real.”

“You were probably just reacting to getting beat up.”

“Something like that.”

Sienna drank her juice, and then she started to dig into her waffles. She slapped on the butter and loaded on the maple syrup.

“I really need this. Thanks.”

“I feel that you were due one good meal.”

“After that dream.”

“It’s funny how some dreams are so lucid.”

“I think that our bodies are trying to tell us something,” Sienna was trying to find out what was the answer to her mystery.

Even from the kitchen window, she could see tall hills and mountains. Any one of these could have inspired Sienna’s dream.

Lynette made a suggestion, “I’ll take you for a ride in the mountains.”

It was going to be a glorious sunny day. After a great breakfast and a long shower, she was ready to put the dream behind her. She dressed and joined Lynette in the car.

It didn’t take long before the roads were steeper.

“It must be scary going up this road with some ice on it.”

“Sometimes after a storm, you just stay in until it all melts.”

“That could be days!”

“Sometimes you take a chance. With salt and four wheel drive, it’s not too bad.”

Sienna offered her proud opinion, “It’s not going to be me driving on ice.” She gasped as they went up the narrow road. “Imagine driving this drunk,”

“Don’t remind me of my wasted youth.”

“It wouldn’t take much to push someone over on one of these straight drops.”

“You’re starting to sound like a killer.”

As they reached the crest of the hill, they started to cruise on down the other side. They were picking up speed. Lynette was driving as if they were on a speed course. She rode the banked curves. They had the windows open and let the wind run through their hair.

“We’re going to need some gas now. That should teach me for wasting it like a kid.”

“That was fun.”

Lynette went in to pay while Sienna pumped. A wild country woman was making weird motions around the car. She started cursing and calling Sienna names. Sienna tried not to even look at her. She didn’t want to encourage her nonsense. This was the flip side of Cordelia.

There they hid everything. For this woman there were no secrets, none at all.

When Lynette jumped back in the car, Sienna told her what had happened.

“She’s hear all the time. Some kids call her a witch. What did she say to you?”

“I couldn’t make out much of anything.”

Maybe if she had tried to interpret what was really being said, she could unravel her own confusion. But the woman appeared as if she would never escape her sentence. Sienna took comfort that she had her wits about her.

The trip had reminded her that there was a very real side to her nightmare. She had been only inches from realizing that fear. From the safety of the moving car, she could contemplate the heights. But they were never a threat to her. It would have been different if someone held her over one of those barriers. She gripped onto her seat as she thought about it.

“That made me hungry, Sienna. Do you want to stop, or I can cook up some steak back at the house?”

Sienna was being seduced by these hearty meals. She wondered if her tastes were more delicate before the accident. Lynette actually got a fire going. She barbecued the meat.

“I’ll have mine well done.”

She couldn’t envision blood dripping from the meat. After eating the steak with mashed potatoes, she was stuffed. She had heard about how foods affected your sleep. She hoped that this would make her sleep even better.

“Sienna, it only 6:30. What are you up for now?”

“I need to walk off this meal.”

They both helped with the dishes. They couldn’t leave them until later. It would be terrible to come back to a mess.

After dark, they could hear dog barks in the woods.

“Is that a wolf?”

“I’ve seen a couple of mountain lions around here.”

Sienna didn’t believe her, “You have not.”

“I swear that I have.”

“Wow!”

“It’s just crazy what you’ll see.”

“I don’t think that I want to know all about it.” Her imagination didn’t need more inspiration. She was too far out already.

They walked some more. Sienna wondered, “Do you have some beer at the house?”

“Aren’t you already stuffed?”

“I just need a little pick me up.”

They sat on the porch drinking beer. Sienna wanted Lynette to tell her some more stories. But both women were on the verge of passing out.

“Tomorrow, I’ll tell you some real bloodcurdling stuff that will curl your hair.”

Sienna ran her fingers through her hair and closed her eyes.