

In my dreams exists a stranger. A man who watches me from far away with a sad smile on his face. He doesn't talk nor does he approaches me. He just... stands there.

He first appeared in my dreams a few months ago. Back then I was going through a terrible breakup and was hurting really bad so when I noticed his continuous appearance in my dreams I just chalked it up to "mental stress" and "anxiety" but then he continued to show up. Night after night he stood there with same sad smile on his face.

I tried talking about this with my family and friends but they all assured me it was just due to stress and that I shouldn't worry about it. Eventually I decided to go to a psychiatrist and tell him about the strange man, he talked to me for a bit and prescribed me a few meds but those did nothing to help.

So Today I decided to attempt something I been too scared to try. Today I'm gonna try to have a lucid dream and talk to the strange man. In the past I purposely induced lucid dreams all the time so this shouldn't be too difficult.

After brushing my teeth, I laid in bed and closed my eyes and after about 20 days I could feel my eyelids getting heavy. I'm going to fall asleep very soon. I took a deep breath and started repeating to myself "I'm gonna have a lucid dream", "I shall be in control", "what I'm going to witness is no reality but a world of dreams" I repeated this over and over again ...

I quickly opened my eyes, I was laying in the middle of a big yard. I looked around me and instantly recognized my surroundings. I was in front of my parent's house. What was I doing here again?

But while I was deep in thought one of my parent's neighbour walked by waiving his hand, I waived back at him and stood on my feet.

All right, I guess I should go see my parents since I'm here. I started walking toward the house when I noticed something was odd with the way I walked. "Did I always move this slowly?"

I continued walking and entered the house. Inside I saw my mother sitting on the couch and conversing with one of my relatives. The moment she saw me she smiled and said:

"Karolina! Honey can you get me a pen from the kitchen?"

"The kitchen?" I quickly replied, something about this felt odd.

"Yes, where else would you find a pen?" Mom replied with a smile.

"R-Right ...Of course the kitchen" I said as I started walking toward the kitchen but before I could reach my destination, a mirror on the wall caught my attention.

I stared back at the mirror checking my reflection, something was odd. Something was very odd.

For some reason I felt the urge to touch my cheeks. I lifted my arms but the moment I tried to make contact with my soft cheeks my fingers penetrated right through them as if they were mere butter.

No, no, no....This doesn't make chance. My fingers should not be able to do such a thing.

ThisThis isn't real.

The moment I said that to myself a sudden realization hit me.

Wait....This....This is a dream. I'm just dreaming. This isn't real at all.

The second I said that to myself, everything ran through my mind. I remembered the reason I'm here, the reason I induced this lucid dream.

"The strange man" I looked around me trying to spot the person I came here for.

But he was nowhere around. He often always watched me from somewhere close.

Maybe it's because I'm at my parent's house. Maybe he doesn't or can't enter other people's home.

"Ha, how courteous of him. He doesn't want to enter people's homes but has no problem invading other's dreams" I said to myself as I started heading to the door.

But before I could pull the handle a sudden knocking on the door echoed in to my ears.

"A visitor?" I pulled the handle and opened the door.

2 unfamiliar policemen greeted my eyes.

"Miss Karolina Porze?" one of the officers spoke with a hint of sadness in his words.

"Yes?" I quickly replied looking back at the officer with confused eyes.

"I'm afraid you will have to come with us Miss Porze" the officer spoke as he started cuffing my hands.

"What? What are you doing?" I quickly replied as I tried to shake him off.

"We found a dead body under your parent's house. You are under arrest for murder" the second officer spoke with a serious look on his face.

"W-What? A corpse? Wait, wait, and no I'm innocent. I didn't do anything" I yelled out as I tried to shake off the officers. What the hell is going on? I'm fully conscious in this dream. I should be able to control it however I want so why can't I shake off these fake dream policemen.

I was dragged to their car and taken to the police station. I tried to talk reason with the policemen but they refused to say a word. It's almost like the person who programmed this dream didn't give them additional lines. (Sigh) What a hopeless comparison.

Before I could make sense of anything, the officers threw me in a prison cell and left.

I sat on the floor and lowered my head in despair.

"I don't have time for this shit. I'm gonna wake up any second now. I need to find the strange man"

But before I can finish my line of thought. A sudden presence caught my attention.

Across the room, a man wearing all black stood there looking at me with the usual sad smile on his face. It's him. It's fucking him.

I gathered all of my courage, parted my lips and spoke:

"H-HeyUh...H-How are you?"

Uhhhhhhh, what the hell am I saying? "How are you?" Really? Is this the best thing I can think off? Damn it Karolina. Get it together.

But while I was beating myself for being my weird self. The strange man started walking closer to me

W-W-W-What's going on? He's coming hereHe's coming here.

My heartbeat started accelerating, my breathing became rapid and irregular.

H-He can't harm me right? I can't get hurt in a dream, right?

O-okay...okay calm down KarolinaCalm down.

The strange man continued walking closer until he was right in front of my cell. The only thing separating us were these prison bars. He stared me up and down for a second but then the unimaginable happenedH-HeHe spoke:

"You're conscious in this dream, aren't you? "

"....." his words completely paralyzed me. This was the opportunity I was hoping for. The reason I was even here for but I.....I couldn't say anything back to him. I just started at him with my eyes completely wide.

" I will take that as yes " the strange man spoke as he gave me a slight smile.

He then came closer to the officer watching over the holding cells and casually took the keys from his belt. For some reason the guard didn't even flinch as if he didn't notice anything at all.

" Let's get you out of here " the strange man spoke as he used the guard's keys to unlock my holding cells.

"But.....But...?" I finally managed to utter a few words. Well I managed to utter one word.

" Don't worry about him, the guard won't try to stop us. Come on, get up " the strange man replied as he offered me his hand with a big smile on his face.

Hundreds of emotions were running through my head at that moment but somehow I found myself reaching for his hand and following him as we left the police station.

"W-What's going on? " I finally managed to speak my first complete phrase the moment we exited the station.

" You're in a dream. Well I'm sure you already know this but it seems your dream has turned to a nightmare all the sudden " the strange man spoke as he stretched his legs.

"Huh? How? " I quickly replied facing the odd man doing stretches.

" Maybe you had something bad for dinner, maybe your under stress. I don't know how nightmares work " the strange spoke as he shook his head in confusion.

"No, I mean how do you know all of this. How do you know this is just a dream? How come you are self-aware? " I quickly asked the important question in my mind.

" It's your dream, you tell me Karolina " the strange man said as he turned around. Because he did I wasn't able to see the expression on his face.

" How do you know my name? "

" There is no time for that. We need to wake you up from this nightmare. Follow me Karoo " the strange man spoke as he grabbed me from my hand and started walking.

" W-WaitNo, I can't wake up yet. I want to know. I wanna know why you are present in all of my dreams. Why do you keep watching me from far away? Who are you? " I spoke as I fixated my feet on the ground.

"You're stubborn as ever Karolina. Didn't you notice that all of your lines are questions? My identity doesn't matter nor does my motivation. If you don't wake up very soon something terrible could happen. This is what matters. So please, I beg of you. Follow me " the strange man spoke, his usual sad smile was once again plastered on his face.

Perhaps I was persuaded by his serious tone of voice or perhaps I couldn't shake off the feeling of intimacy and closeness I felt toward him since the very first time I saw him in my dreamsthe reason doesn't matter for I eventually chose to walk behind him .

"Where are we going anyway? " I asked as I walked next to the odd man. I should at least be told of our destination.

" We're going to wake you up and to do so we need to head to the highest building here " the odd man replied as he pointed at a 12 floor building in the distance.

" Really? That's the tallest building? " I said.

" This dreamscape is surprisingly very accurately based on your real life town so I'm afraid there is no Empire state or Bordj khalifa here " the strange man spoke as he scratched his beard. Did he just make fun of my town?

We continued walking down the road ignoring the people passing us by when a sudden possibility ran through my mind so I decided to speak:

" Are you a ghost? "

" A ghost? "

" Is this why you always appear in my dreams? Are you a lost ghost seeking my help in order to pass on to the other side? Maybe dreams are the world separating the real world and the other " I spoke as I explained my thoughts.

" Interesting theory " the odd man spoke with a cold stare.

" So I'm right? "

" Not really, I have no interest in going to the other side. Quite the opposite actually. I'm the happiest right here " the strange man spoke with a genuine smile on his face as he looked me in the eyes.

But before I could ask him something else, a loud ringing echoed around us.

" What the hell is that? " I yelled as I started looking around me.

" Fuck, we're running out of time. Start running Karoo, come on "the odd man spoke as he grabbed my hand and started running.

I didn't understand what was going on but the urgency in his voice made me start running. We ran as fast as we could until we reached the tall building and went inside.

Instead of waiting for the elevator we took the stairs and started running up. We continued moving until we reach the rooftop.

" There is nothing here " I yelled as I addressed the odd man but instead of listening to my words his gaze was focused on something else entirely. I turned around to face the direction he was looking at when all the sudden a horrific sight greeted my eyes.

" What the fuck is that? " I spoke as I shook my head in disbelief. A horrific menacing dark cloud was moving close from the distance swallowing everything on its path. Everything it touches turned to nothing.

" What the hell is that? " I spoke as I addressed the odd man standing next to me.

" A correction cloud? It must have detected an anomaly and now it's attempting to delete it " the odd man replied as he tightened his fists.

" What anomaly? " I quickly asked.

" You "

" What?" I uttered in disbelief. How am I an anomaly? I'm the fucking creator of this fucking dream.

" There can't be 2 conscious persons in one lucid dream. The cloud has detected you the moment you gained self-awareness, It's doesn't know you are the dream owner and it's attempting to kill you. We don't have any more time. We need to act now Karolina. We need to wake you up " the strange spoke anxiously, this was the first time I saw him stressing out about something.

" The most sure way to wake up from a dream is to jump from a high place. This is why we are here. You need to jump from this building Karolina " the odd man added as he held my shoulders.

" Jump? Are you crazy? " I quickly replied

" I know how it sounds but remember this is just a dream. No harm will befall you but if that fucking clouds deletes you then you could disappear forever. That cloud could delete you from existence " the odd man spoke tightening his grasp on my shoulders.

"B-But waityou haven't answered me yet. Who are you? And why do you keep appearing in my dreams? Please tell me." I asked as I faced the man in front me denying his gaze from escaping mine.

"MyMy identity is.....Look trust me when I tell you it's better if you don't know. The answer to your questions will only bring you pain and suffering. Please trust me " the odd man replied with a pained look on his face.

" I don't careI need to know. I deserve to knowI will be coming back here every single night until you tell me the truth. I don't care if I get deleted by this weird looking cloud. I need answers " I replied firmly as I pushed myself from his grasp.

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We stared at each other in silence. The dark cloud continued approaching us as it gradually swallowed the world behind us but neither of was thinking about that. Our only focus was the other person standing in front of the other.

The odd man's lips finally parted but while I awaited to hear the ultimate truth. He suddenly came closer to me and wrapped his arms around me. My body instantly melted between his arms and a soft feeling spread through my heart. It was a hug ...a simple normal hug but at the same time so much more. He held me even tighter as I felt his breath at the back of my neck.

He then lifted my head and softly kissed my lips .

“ I love you Karolina “ the odd man spoke as he pushed me away from him all the sudden. My body struggled to regain balance but it was futile for I quickly noticed that my feet were no longer on solid ground.

My body fell from the tall building in slow motion as my eyes kept fixating at the men who just pushed me off. The man who refused to give the answers I worked so hard to obtain. The man that hugged me, kissed and confessed his love to me before throwing me from a high building.

The sad smile on his face was the last thing I saw that night.

The point of view of the Odd man

Her body fell so gracefully. She looked so beautiful, a part of me truly believed she would spread wings and fly in the air like an angel. She always looked so beautiful.

But the moment her body touched the ground she instantly disappeared and escaped the correction cloud. That means my method worked and she is now awake in the real world. I wonder if she will even remember this dream.

I sat on the edge of the tall building watching the approaching dark cloud deleting everything in its path. There was no way for me to run nor hide. I could do is think about the events of today.

I was surprised , I was really surprised she was conscious in her dream today and the fact she did this just because she was curious about me made me so happy I held myself from kissing her the moment I saw her in that prison cell . Fuck, I love this woman way too much. I’ve always did.

Ever since the first day I met her, I knew this woman is special and that one day I will be completely and fully be in love with her. Of course back then we were still far from each other and that killed me every night.

I didn’t want to wait, I wanted to be with her right that instant and that led me to that sketchy website. It was supposed to help me visit her in her dreams and spend time with her. I made sure to follow the instructions on that website correctly and I surprisingly did manage to enter her dream and be with her but once I wanted to leave I realized that I couldn’t. I became stuck and ever since that day I been here.

I remain in this world of dreams every night she dreams. I tried everything I could think off to escape but nothing worked....nothing transported me back to the real words.

After a few weeks of continuously trying I surrendered to my fate and that’s when I realized even though I was stuck in someone’s dream I wasn’t exactly unhappy. I had the chance to see the woman I love each night. Through her dreams I would see what was bothering her and I was able to indirectly help her with those problems. I was happy, I was fucking happy.

I didn’t think she even noticed my existence but she did, she really did and she made herself have a lucid dream just to talk to me and not only did I manage to talk to her after so long, I got to hold her hand, hug her and even kiss her. God, I can’t ask for anything more than this.

A broad smile decorated my face as the dark cloud finally reached the building.

I closed my eyes and surrendered myself to the end.