

I decide to get up. This is what I usually do so I can stop torturing myself with the ever-present thoughts in my head.

I wonder what it means, this dream, the last dream. This is my mind's way of trying to sort things all out. I had already demonstrated some abilities with friends, so it really couldn't be denied.

I talk to them without talking. I can hear their thoughts or feel what they are feeling emotionally. I open the door before they knock sometimes, as if I can hear my name being called as they approach.

"How did you know, I was about to knock and when?" My visitors often ask.
"Just a feeling," I'd say, but in my head I can hear that particular person's voice.

When I have asked, if they called out on approach, the answer is "No" always. I can't tell the difference from when, someone actually does. It's exactly the same experience.

A friend once said, "Yes, but not out loud." We laughed. I was happy to hear that. He had heard me speak of this before so he tried to send me signals. I never got them — only when he was locked out of the building where I lived because he actually, called at my window. Some people I get a partial or no connection with.

I might text to one of my friends with my cell phone, a message that just comes to mind at that moment. It could be the answer to a thought one of my friends said, they were having right then. They tell me about it; I don't realize in the moment. I only know I have to tell them. If I ignore doing so, it bothers me until I do.

But unlike all of this, the man in my dream is literally trying to tell me something. The reoccurring dreams in the past have always progress to the worst fear and confusion, I've ever experienced. I'm forced, in these dreams, to deal with what I fear most — like drowning and being in the dark — before I wake up in terror.

The length of the dream gradually will increase, adding each of the elements I fear one at a time unless, I solve the haunting riddle. I have to figure out what it represents and often, I can't understand the meaning.

Alternately, by making it to the end of the dream its over which can take a while.

Once, I had a dream that lasted about a year.

Its dark; I don't feel safe — that was the first couple nights.

It's late and my car breaks down. I don't know exactly where I am. I need help. I have to decide, after looking at my cell phone that's now dead, to wait or get out and walk.

I wake up because there's a car passing.

Then the next time as I'm deciding to get out and look for a telephone booth I notice the same car that passed a few minutes before. There's a man inside. Fearing the strange man, I gasp and wake up.

Ultimately, I get out of the car. As I slam the heavy old door it starts raining. I'm cold. Its dark and I'm scared. I start walking and see the same car again. The strange man is not inside now, but his car is parked behind my car. No one is inside. I'm upset about being in the situation thinking I could have avoided it somehow, mad at myself.

I think, "If I didn't like old cars so much, maybe I wouldn't be here." I have a 1972 280-SE Mercedes in my dream, just like the car I really drive. I love my car, it's a classic still beautiful with all of its original parts, everything. Sometimes, I sit in it and don't drive when stressed or locked out.

A friend said to me once, "Anything can break at any time because of its age," after I admired his classic car. "It's meant to be a second car, if you ever get one." He was right.

But in this dream the car is not the point. I wonder where the man is.

I walk faster. I can't see anyone around. I'm by the beach, waves are crashing. I'm soaking wet by now. I pass closed storefronts with street lamps along the sidewalk. I want to stay near the lights, but no help is there. I can hear a furious ocean throwing waves at me.

Use your head, I think. Get help quick. Get out of this situation.

I look behind me and all around. I put my keys between each of my fingers - I remember this from a self defense class my father forced me to take. Anyway, I see a pier off in the distance. Every storefront is still closed and I still don't see that man from the car anywhere.

Why would he stop here? I'm the only reason.

The pier is dark but I'm certain there has to be a phone booth there. So I run into the darkness that I hate and fear, across damp sand toward the pier.

The sand would wake me up sometimes because I have to take my shoes off to get traction and its cold and wet on my feet.

That went on for months.

Not every day, thankfully but I never knew when it would come to me. Sleep wasn't my friend, not anymore. Sleep became very much like a boyfriend you are in love with but whom he has become is someone violent. He is unreasonable and not the person you met at first — best way I can describe it. You want the love you felt from him back in the beginning — it's the greatest feeling in the world, but you can't have it because his love turned bad. It's no longer what's right. But, you want and needed it to feel better before now. Because, you are remembering when, it was good for you.

Okay, so I make it to the pier. Now, as I run I notice someone behind me, also moving quickly. I can hear him on the sidewalk.

I won't know when he gets near. I won't be able to tell any longer how close he is because he'll have reached the sand. I try to move as fast as I can.

Anyway, the point is I start to get that feeling like when you reach for someone and you try to grab them but just miss. I feel the air and the movement of a large hand swiping down my body. It goes from the back of my neck to the middle of my lower back every time he does it - I jerk forward just out of his grasp.

I try to scream, I can't. I'm letting out this sound that is saying, "Please" hoping he can tell I'm pleading for my life — because I really want to live. I'm not gonna be an easy kill. I'm going to fight back until one of us is dead, leaving evidence of not having given in.

At this point, I hear him telling me to stop. I can't believe he expects me to listen. He must be crazy, probably is. I run up three wide concrete slabs to the pier steps. I leap each one in a single stride.

I'm at the mouth of the pier, its ready and waiting to swallow me. I see a phone booth. I have to run down the middle all the way to the end. The booth holds the only light on the pier; the lamps along the pier are all burned out. The ocean crashes up over the sides. I'm in a rainstorm and it's almost pitch black. Only the full moon lights my path.

I have to decide in an instant if I should turn and fight or if I can make it to the booth running barefoot on concrete. I decide to try. With this man on my heels, I drop my shoes which I'd planned on using as a weapon. I push myself beyond anything I ever thought possible, pumping my arms with my hands open flat. The man's voice gets louder.

I risk a glance over my shoulder.

He has on a raincoat; he's a dark silhouette wearing a hat like a detective-type of character, you know what I mean.

After years and tears of my own terror in this dream, I finally make it to the phone booth. I slam the accordion door open, hop inside and close the door. I grab the phone off the hook and realize I have to dig for change. I don't have time. Then I remember that you can dial the operator for free.

I have no dial tone. I'm clicking, clicking, and clicking the receiver flap. The door behind me opens a crack.

I hear the operator, "May I help you?"

I have to keep him out. Without a second thought, I slide down the back of the booth and sit on the floor holding the door closed with my legs.

"Let me in." He says.

I yell at the operator, "I need help!" but I don't know the address — where I am. "There's a man trying to force his way into the elevator." I know it's a phone booth, but that's what I said.

That part of the dream lasted for ages.

That's the moment when I started sleep walking again. I used to do it when I was about four. I remember my mom trying everything to get me to stay in my bed and to go back to sleep. I never could. I would wake my sister up every time. We had a shared bedroom but had to sleep in the dark. I would get in bed with her.

But that wasn't the end. When the stranger pushed the door open wider I felt vulnerable and helpless.

"There's a man in here. I don't want him here. He's been chasing me forever." I shout into the receiver. "He's trying to get in the phone booth. I believe he wants to hurt me." I tell her the exit I used to get off the freeway. Tell her I'm not far from the exit and describe my surroundings.

"I know where you are." She says.

The base of the phone is inches above my head. The door flies open. My eyes close. I'm still sitting on the floor with my knees in front of my chest, my arms wrapped around my knees with my face buried in them. I only know that should he touch me, with the first blow I'd go crazy on him.

When I open my eyes a hand reaches out, like he's expecting me to grab it.

I'm crying and ask, "What do you want? The police are on the way."

"Yes," he said. "I know. I called them."

"What? What kind of crazy are you?" He looks puzzled.

"I wanted to help. I saw your car broke down. I was in my store near where you left your car. I figured you could use a hand." Then he asks, "Why were you running?"

"To get away from you." I say.

"Why?" he asks again, with his hand still out waiting for me to grab it. I do.

And that was the end.

I decide to get up. This is what I usually do so I can stop torturing myself with the ever-present thoughts in my head.

I wonder what it means, this dream, the last dream. Something in my life needs to be dealt with. This is my mind's way of trying to sort it all out.

I know if I have several nights of this, I won't be able to sleep from worrying about it. Then, when I finally do sleep from exhaustion my sleepwalking begins again. Dealing with the difficulty, determining what is really happening and what is not, goes right along with it all.

It gets quite difficult at times trying to tell the difference. The places and situations are all so real. I'm not an animal, or flying. There's nothing to give clues that I'm dreaming.

When I sleepwalk it only makes things worse. I start having déjà vu when I'm awake, talking to people. I know exactly, what will be said...

I know exactly what everyone will say.

And yet, when I ask if we've had this conversation before, they always say no. But, I have had it before — without them knowing.

How else would I know?

I need to figure out what the déjà vu has to do with my dreams. It's odd to wake up with your eyes open, with someone in the room; in mid-conversation and not remember letting them in or what we were talking about. No matter how many times it happens, it's still unsettling.

I started sleeping in my clothes a long time ago. I also slept with the light on just in case anyone was there when I woke up... I didn't remember inviting in.

I'm terrified of the dark because of it.

I'm gonna have to start to making sure the chain is on the door before I go to sleep... so I can try to keep myself inside. I hate waking up outside. It seems I have more trouble with the chain on the door when I'm awake than when asleep.

It's usually walking on the cold ground that snaps me out of it. I forget my shoes and my keys. So I'll be locked out. Then comes the walk next door to my neighbors apartment where I keep a spare key. Or wait till morning and have my manager let me back in.

It's annoying whichever turns out to be the case.

I've made meals for people, I've even driven my car, but I always manage to make it back to my apartment safely.

Back in bed I shiver. I pull the covers up over my head and say, "Move over here," though he's never warm to cuddle with — his feet are always cold. I hate it when he tries warming them on my legs. But, I still want him close.

It's then I notice no one's there.

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