

another pSecret pSociety pshort pstory



The Vision by Mike Bozart (Agent 33) | Aug. 2017

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by Mike Bozart

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Nick awoke bemused. After arriving home from work (commercial plumbing), he had taken a late Friday afternoon nap in his rented single-wide mobile home near Clam Beach (CA, USA). In a very-real-feeling dream, he was walking along the in-the-vicinity Little River, when he suddenly found himself in a lush-and-emerald-green-like-Ireland meadow. A Caucasian farmer then came up to him – seemingly from out of nowhere – and handed him a sheet of paper. Nick, a thirty-four-year-old Dutch American, zoomed in on the image. It appeared to be a detail of a USGS (United States Geological Survey) topographic quadrangle. For some unknown-to-him reason, the farmer then began to gesture with his hands as if he were perplexed, but he didn't say anything. Nick thought: *Is he mute?*

Then Nick looked back at the unlabeled physical map. The contour lines started to pulsate. The shading intensified. A voice – was it in his head? – spoke up. “This is where a gold nugget weighing almost 49 troy ounces [1.524 kg] is not-so-deeply buried. It's on this map, right at the confluence of two streams. Now, go out and claim it before someone else does!” *Troy ounces?*

Nick turned to the left, as he thought that the farmer might have been the one talking, but he had vanished; the old man in faded, oil-stained, holey denim overalls was nowhere to be seen. And then, the hill off to his right seemed to be smiling. A dipping gully then winked at him. The dream ended with a ferocious gust of wind that swept across the field, creating surface waves. *What a strange, surreal dream that was. Did Dietrich sprinkle something in my weed? [marijuana] If so, hope it's nontoxic.*

His cell phone, which was on the oak coffee table, then rang. Nick grabbed it. “Hello, Ed. What's up?”

“Want to go out for a few beers tonight, Nick?”

“Yeah, sure. Where?”

“Clam Beach Tavern.” [2.8 miles – 4.5 km – south-southwest in McKinleyville]

“Ok, let me guess, Ed: You're angling for the new brunette.”

“How did you know?” Ed chuckled.

“I know your weaselly ways. No need to be coy, Roy.” *Just listen to me?*

“See you at nine, Nick?”

“You got it. Later.”

At a regulars-starting-to-pile-in 9:19 PM, black-haired Nick and blonde-haired Ed were playing a game of 9-ball on a billiard table in the back of the bar. The solid-purple 4-ball fell into the near side pocket. *Wow. Ed finally made a delicate cut shot. He seems really focused tonight.*

“Nice shot, Ed,” Nick said.

“Thanks, man,” Ed replied.

“So, when are you going to make your move on Veronica?”

“Probably just before closing time,” Ed said as he took another shot. However, the solid-orange 5-ball rattled out of the corner pocket.

“Pretty risky strategy, my friend,” Nick countered. “V-ron [Veronica] may no longer be available by night’s end.”

Ed just grinned.

Nick sank the 5. And then, in rapid succession, he knocked in the 6 and 7 balls. The solid-black, white-eyed 8-ball was left on the lip of the far corner pocket. “Darn!” Nick exclaimed. “Could we please have a minor temblor right about now?” *What?! / Temble-tumble. [sic]*

“Never joke about earthquakes – not in California,” Ed warned as he bagged the essentially-a-gimme 8-ball.

“Do you really think that my remark will increase coastal Humboldt County seismicity, Ed?” *I sure hope not.*

“Nick, it’s just not wise to tempt fate – the calamitous kind of fate, that is.” Ed then pushed the yellow-striped 9-ball just wide of the side pocket. However, it came to rest a centimeter ($\frac{2}{5}$ of an inch) off the rail. *It’s safe there.*

“Ed, do you believe in visions?” *Wonder what Nick ingested this time. Or, has he gone wacky-religious? Is a recruiting pitch coming next?*

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