

*Dreamscape*

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## *Dreamscape*

*I'm flying. I close my eyes for a moment, feeling the warm air brushing my face, my arms stretched out and my hair blowing freely in the wind. I love this dream, not only because of the wonderful feeling of freedom when I fly, but because when I dream I see him...*



# *Chapter 1*

## *Alex*

I opened my heavy eye lids to the sound of Radio One's DJ's talking about epic films that they hadn't seen yet. It was always nice waking up to their conversations, they were always light hearted and funny.

The covers lay over my body so soft and warm on my skin, it wasn't exactly a warm apartment, so getting up was not very appealing, still, mind over matter. In the kitchen I heard my roommate Lisa putting the kettle on.

“Hey Lisa, could you make me a cuppa as well?” I called out in a rough morning voice.

“Sure, no prob,” she said with her sweet and positive sounding voice. She was one of the most positive people I knew, that Lisa, and was the perfect person to have

around on a rainy day, or any day! She was a messy little thing though, with a side dish of new dramas on a regular basis, especially when it came to men. But you could have the best time with her, always taking the 'serious' out of the equation.

We became flat mates a few months ago when I'd just finished art college. She'd studied dance and was now on her last year. We'd met at a few parties and always got on so well. So here we were, in a little two bedroom flat on Broughton Road, Edinburgh. The most historically beautiful city in the world, with its castle, its pipers, its many cafés, bars, festivals and rain... Yes it rained A LOT! But that was all part of the charm.

I reluctantly pulled off the duvet, sat up with my shoulders hanging as low as my eyelids and then stood up, stretching my arms up in the air and yawning whilst looking out of the window of my bedroom. I saw a few people walking the streets as I looked down, most of them off to work I presumed. I put on my lilac dressing gown. Even though it was the end of September and nowhere near winter, it still felt cold. I walked to the kitchen where Lisa was standing with her hand stretched out holding a cup of tea for me.

“Thanks Lisa, you’re the best.”

“No prob hun,” she said as she dashed off to the bathroom.

I sat there for a while drinking my tea and eating some toast waiting for Lisa to get ready so that I could pop in for a quick shower.

Our bathroom was tiny and quite old but I was glad that it was tiled rather than carpet, it was more hygienic that way. Lisa was luckily enough quite fast in the bathroom, she’d take her time in her bedroom instead. I was in there

within ten minutes to have a quick wash.

In the hallway I passed one of my paintings, I loved to paint and I had a few hung up in the flat. The one in the hall was of a dolphin in the sea swimming happily around water and music, as in music notes and instruments, all in vivid colours that all melted together. I was actually quite proud of that one. I felt strongly about all my paintings, but as an artist I could be very self critical. This painting in the hall however, I had worked on for a long time and it touched me every time I saw it, and woke a feeling inside me that was hard to explain.

I walked into my bedroom with a towel wrapped around me. The walls were yellow, which I had never really liked, but I was renting so I didn't have much choice in the matter. My bed was in the middle of the room with a large bay window straight ahead as I walked in. The room was of decent size with a high ceiling, but with my art set up taking over about a third of the room, it looked quite small.

I went to my closet and got out a black fitted dress and tights, which was what I normally wore to work. Just adding some long dangly silver earrings and a silver bracelet that I had been given as a Christmas gift from my mum.

I sat down in front of my mirror and started drying and styling my dark, shoulder length hair that was slightly wavy and curled towards the ends, I always wore my long fringe to the side. My frame was slim with some curves, hazel eyes, full lips and a straight edged nose. Some would call me quite pretty but that hadn't always been the case. I was an ugly duckling growing up. I had been quite chubby and got bullied for it. They would call me things like whale, ugly and fat, and at PE class nobody would

want me on their team. I had started to lose the weight at age thirteen but even when the bullying had stopped, the words of the kids around me growing up would always lay there as scars that were only visible to me. It was hard to appreciate being fairly pretty now. At times I still felt like that little fat kid and I would hear the words of the bullies in my head, but I would sometimes use those feelings as inspiration for my art. It was a good way of venting the past.

On my way out I said goodbye to Lisa.

“See ya later Alex! Have a fab day!” she sang from her bedroom. That's what most people called me, Alex, short for Alexandra. At work it was Ms Walker and if my mother was angry with me, it was always Alexandra!

I grabbed the bus up to the Royal Mile where I worked. The buildings were mostly old looking and grey. A lot of bay windows, which made them look instantly prettier and rather cosy. There was something so artistic about Edinburgh. The way it had formed over the years made it seem more like an interesting puzzle with hills, cobble streets, winding roads and all kinds of buildings that were from several hundred years ago to new buildings recently built. It made for a fascinating view you never grew tired of.

Before I got to work each day I always went to Costa Coffee and ordered a skinny latte for me and a black coffee for my boss. Morning coffee bliss! Today the sun was actually out, so there was no need for the umbrella yet, but knowing lovely Scotland you could never be too sure when the next rain would appear.

I walked up to a golden framed door which had the name 'The Golden Art gallery' on top of it; this was my

job.

“Good morning Christine,” I said with a smile.

“What’s so good about it?” she replied.

“Just good, good weather, good coffee,” I said, rolling my eyes as I shut the door behind me.

My boss...not the most positive person put on this planet.

I loved being close to art and felt like I learnt a lot from it, but she treated me like I was a complete idiot most of the time and I hated that, as anyone would. I knew I had a lot to learn but she was the kind of person that would give you a hard time for all the things you hadn’t learned yet. I think it must make her feel better in some twisted way.

She always wore a black pencil skirt, white shirt and black high heels. She had short dark hair, slim, about five seven feet tall and would not smile for anything. Actually that's not entirely true, she would smile for her little Papillon, a black and white dog called Adele. I actually like that dog but I was often not aloud near her, nobody was. Christine thought Adele would catch whatever bug was running around at the time. She was very over protective when it came to Adele.

“We’re very busy today, we have a few paintings coming in and I need to keep a clear head so no chitter chatter today thank you very much,” she said whilst taking her coffee from my hand.

“Yes Christine. I will get busy with work and let you concentrate on what you do best. Just let me know if you need anything.”

If I didn’t have this dream of owning my own art gallery I would have quit that job within a month due to Christine being the way she was. Still, I did learn a lot from her. She was strict and miserable but she knew what she was talking about, and I needed the experience. She

had worked her way up, and she'd learned that you have to be tough in this world in order to get somewhere with your career.

The day went by smoothly. It got close to the afternoon and almost closing time. Christine always stayed longer than me. She was a bit of a workaholic. She was divorced and all she really had was her little dog Adele, who was sitting nicely by her side as she studied her laptop for something. I felt bad for her sometimes, imagining how lonely she must feel at times. She didn't have any children and didn't seem to have many friends either. At her age of 36 she could probably still have kids if she wanted to, but that would mean finding a mate, and that in turn would mean she'd have to be at least a little bit nice to a man who could tolerate her.

I left work at four-thirty, grabbing my jacket and scarf on the way out. It had grown chillier in the air during the day so I pulled my jacket around me hugging myself for warmth as I waited at the bus stop.

I was sitting on the bus as I heard my mobile go off. I dug for it in my beige bag that I had bought at 'Next' and saw that it was Chris. He was a college friend. I know they say men and women can't be friends but we really were just that. And no, he isn't gay, or at least he was hiding it well if he was. Chris was slightly taller than me. He had a slim frame, dark blonde hair and was now working at a bank. He didn't like it one bit and kept saying 'it's only for a short time'. The problem with that was that he didn't know what he wanted to do in life yet. He had studied art with me in college and he had enjoyed it for the first few months until he'd dropped out. But he

had also wanted to be a musician, a pro surfer, a writer, a policeman...the list goes on. His interests changed rapidly, but he was always saying 'life is too short, how else am I gonna have time to get it all in. I had to give him credit for being so positive about it. He didn't stress about life, and I liked being around the energy he gave.

“Hey Chris, what's up?” I said.

“Yo Alex! There is this band playing tonight at the Bongo Club! I know the bass player, they're awesome, you gotta come! There'll be lots of hot guys for you.”

“Ha! How do you know that for sure? Last time I didn't see any and I just got some drunk old dude trying to feel me up! Reckon I need therapy after that and YOU should pay!” I said.

“Come on doll face, when you're as good looking as yourself you gotta be prepared for all sorts of men, even the weirdoes,” he replied.

“Flattery will NOT help Mr!”

“But will you come out! Come on! It'll be great! I'll buy you a drink ...or four...whatever. ”

“Hmmm... well OK, actually could be nice with a wee night out, what time?”

“Yay, nice! About 8 pm? ” He suggested.

“Cool, see you later. Bye.”

“See ya! Bye.”

The thing I loved about Chris was that he always had some social plan on the go. When in doubt about what to do, one could always call Chris and he'd have a plan! Today was Friday so going to see a band sounded like a perfect start to the weekend.

The bus turned down Broughton Road as I saw a couple on the pavement holding hands and giggling. They must have been around my age, they looked so happy. I'd

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