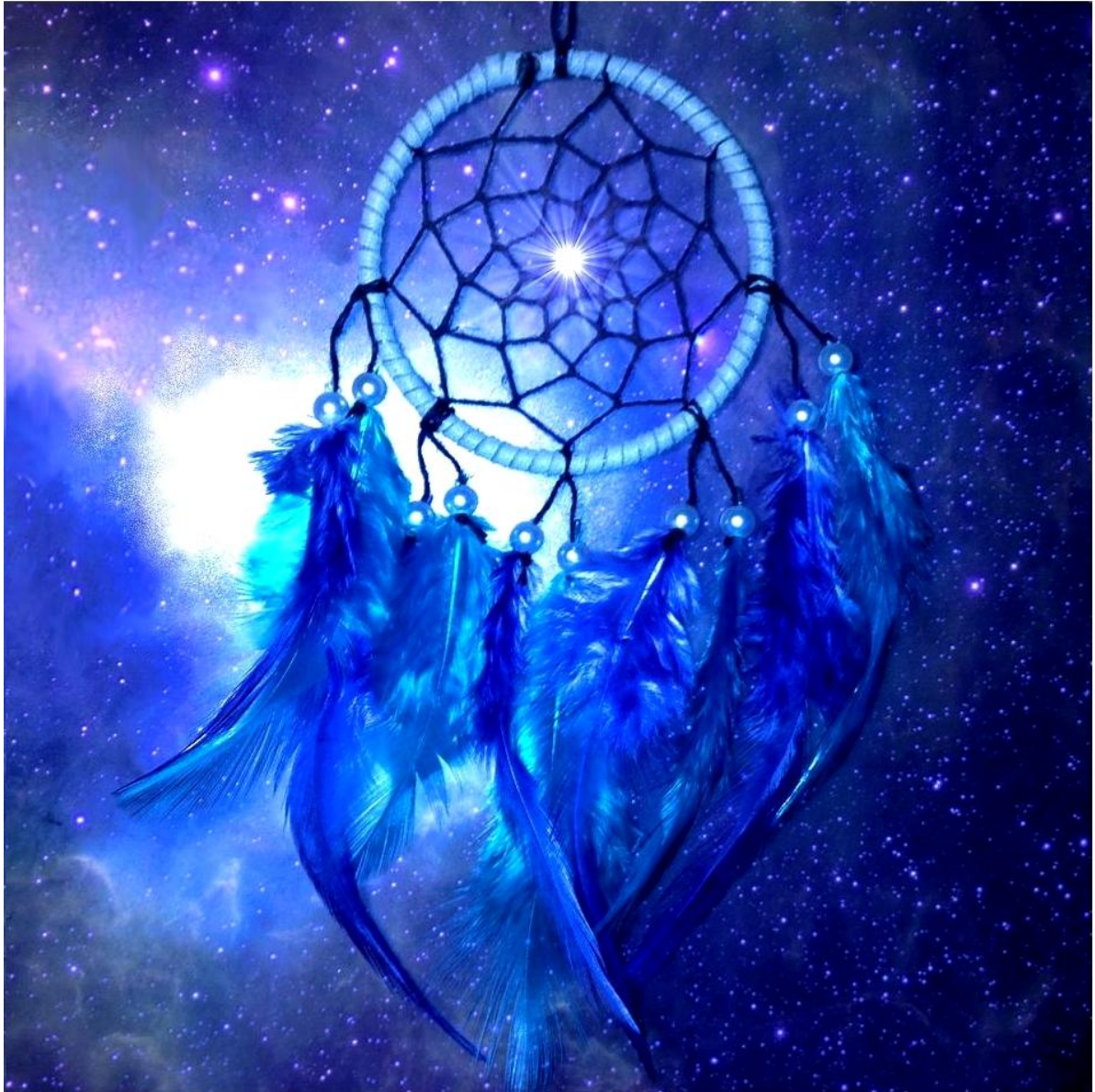




*Chrys Romeo*



**DREAM CATCHER**

# *Dream Catcher*

*by Chrys Romeo*

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It started when he was twelve: that was when he found the dream catcher.

He found it on a deserted beach, swinging in the breeze, tied up on the branch of a tree. It was a beautiful dream catcher, like a blue spider web shining in sunlight. It seemed to sing to him somehow, a mysterious whistle that he heard through the swirls of dust, sand and the roar of the waves. The feathers hanging on the small circle were turquoise and seemed to whisper softly something unknown. He looked at it with his greenish eyes like the sea water and he felt an instant connection to the lonesome object, just as he felt a connection to the waves and the distant horizon, breathing with him each sunrise, each moment he was walking on the warm burning sand or jumping on the rocks washed by the tide with rough edges covered in algae and empty seashells clinging to the stone through time. He knew the beach well, but he had never seen anything like that dream catcher before. It was unusual that the object was there. It was something in that dream catcher that reminded him of the powerful appealing mystery of the sea, the deserted beach and the eternal horizon. He was an athletic and agile boy, so he climbed the tree and reached out to the branch the dream catcher was tied to.

Lucky – because that was his name – had a gift for finding lost objects, people and places he had never been to. When someone from his entourage was looking for something, they always called him, because he had an unexplained instinct to go exactly in the right direction. So he was not surprised when he found the dream catcher in the tree. “Finders keepers”, he thought. He was a curious boy, so he untied the string from the branch and took the dream catcher home, being mesmerized by it from the first moment.

He hanged the round object in his room. From that day on, his life magically improved: he got the best grades at school, won the first prizes in any contest he got in, went to college and achieved everything he set his mind to. He started to believe he had some surreal powers that the dream catcher had infused in his existence. He was convinced the presence of the dream catcher was magical. Sometimes when he looked at it, the spider web seemed to sparkle mysteriously and he could almost hear the turquoise feathers whisper and sing imperceptibly as they moved swiftly. It was a sound similar to the dim resonance of the waves in a seashell brought closer to the ear; it was like an incantation.

On the night he turned twenty one – the reversed numbers of twelve - he had an unusual dream: he was at his summer beach house and he was holding the dream catcher in his hand. It was midnight and there was a storm at sea. The waves were crashing on the rocks along the shore. He looked at the dream catcher in the dark: through the web of the shiny circle he could see rays of light in many colors, going out above the waves, like laser lines pointing to a distant place in the storm.

“You’ve got the key. You must warn them” he heard a voice.

It was a clear voice, a woman's voice resonating with energy and inspiring him to action. It had something warm and a magical vibe to it. At the same moment when he distinguished the words, he found himself in the middle of the storm, out at sea, on a piece of land like a small pier made of rocks and broken cement columns. The rays of light flooded the pier in many colors and the stormy clouds above had turned orange and pink. The voice could be heard louder and louder, getting nearer.

"You must go there. You must tell them."

"Go where? Tell what? To whom?" he asked, looking around and not seeing anyone.

He was half aware that he was immersed in a dream, but something about it seemed more real than just a fantastic projection.

"You must tell them", the voice spoke again. "You must go back there."

"Go back where? And where am I now anyway? Who are you?" he asked looking around helplessly.

The rays of light gathered in a spot and a holographic image appeared inside the colorful curtain. It was the silhouette of a person. It looked like a person, but it was made of light. Her long hair blazing in bright sparks was flowing on her shoulders and her blue eyes were looking at Lucky with hypnotizing intensity. Everything about her was sparkling, but her eyes had something kind and infinite like immense energy of an entire universe - something so absolute and captivating, that he forgot his words and remained staring at her. He felt his eyes of a clear green sea filling with brightness, just as sunlight would dance in the water, above moving waves. Her sparkling presence was an aura that reached his soul instantly, as if there would be no barriers or shields between them. He could sense her

energy in radiating brightness and it was thrilling warmth that made his skin tingle.

She took a few steps directly towards him, slowly but steadily, smiling attentively as if she was curious about his presence too. Lucky still held the dream catcher in his hand. He felt that her apparition was somehow linked to the magical spider web and the turquoise feathers.

She stopped in front of him and explained:

“I am the voice of the Central Conscience of another dimension”, she spoke calmly and clearly. “You can call me C.C., just to make it simple.”

“Can I call you Spark? You’re so intensely bright...”

“Yes, you may call me as you wish. I am an undefined energy and I’m speaking to you from another reality. It’s a universe you don’t know, but your mind is connected to it through the dream catcher. I took this form so that you can see me as a person, but I’m not this body. I am a lot more than the light you can imagine flooding the galaxy...”

“Is this a dream?”

“It’s not a dream, even though it came to you as a dream - because that’s the easiest way to communicate. It’s a message that you get because you’re on the right frequency and you can hear me.”

“What is this place? Where am I?”

“You’re in the undefined zone where ships and planes get lost because they go to another universe. And you’re in the place where our worlds intersect.”

“Why did you tell me to go back? Go back where? And warn who about what?”

She looked at him as if she was evaluating his power of understanding. Then she said, with the same voice that seemed to come from everywhere around, spreading intense energy and covering the storm:

“I need you to go back in time and tell the people on the ship about the sinking. There are many souls on that ship and the turbulence in the energy of our universe is going to be making ripples of negative vibes for too long because of that catastrophe. You must warn them.”

Lucky stared at her amazed.

“What ship are you talking about?”

“You probably know: the Titanic.”

He almost dropped the dream catcher from his hand.

“But that ship sank long ago! And it was in the middle of the frozen ocean! How am I supposed to get there? It’s history, it cannot be changed!”

“See, that’s the thing: that maybe it can. If you go back and warn them.”

He looked at her, thinking. He was so willing to believe her miraculous apparition was speaking the truth, but he didn’t see how he could accomplish changing such an event in history. She seemed to understand his hesitation. She tried to simplify the vision of what he had to do:

“You must first go back to your beach house. And that’s where I’ll tell you how to fix that disturbance in the higher dimensional universe. Because of it, the positive energy of our invisible universe is out of balance and the dimension I come from might disappear. It’s already shaking and I worry that it might create a drain or a whirl that will extinguish the light we rely on. We have to reduce the negative events in your world, because it’s too burdened with them and it acts like a vacuum, voiding the light from other dimensions.”



He realized it was a huge responsibility – to find a way to change an event in the past and save an unknown invisible universe. It seemed too much for a simple human.

“Why me?” he asked.

She smiled.

“You’ve got the dream catcher.”

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After he woke up, Lucky knew he had to go to his summer beach house.

He took the dream catcher with him and went there the same day.

The beach house was small and it had a porch and a roof covered in straws. Lucky had always liked that roof: it gave the house a wild aspect.

As he stood there on the porch in the sunlight, wearing only a pair of shorts and watching the waves splashing on the shore, he felt the same connection to the sea that he had always sensed. Even from the years when he was a young boy he felt he belonged to the immensity of greenish waves expanding to the horizon. He was so addicted to the sea and to the absolute freedom of the open horizon that he felt the need to be on the shore as much as possible, any moment of the day. Sometimes, he could almost hear the sea calling him with its shuffling waves, as if it was alive with feelings, alluring him to the water, asking him to remain around. He could spend hours just

watching it, glancing to the horizon and feeling the energy of the endless waves.

It was noon and Spark hadn't given him any sign. He felt he was waiting in vain – yet somehow, he sensed that she would not abandon him. As he was beginning to wonder if the vision of light had actually been just an illusion; he thought about the dream catcher he had left by the window inside the beach house. At that moment, he noticed a man walking on the beach. The man got closer and passed by in front of the beach house. It was an Indian man with long grey hair – one of those tribe wise men wearing feathers and carrying magical amulets around their necks. The man looked at him for a moment. He had long feathers clipped to the back of his head.

“You're the one with the Dream Catcher, aren't you?” he said.

Lucky did not expect anyone to know about his magical dream catcher.

“What do you mean?” he replied.

“You be careful with it, boy. You be careful with it.”

And the man continued to walk, distancing himself along the shore.

Lucky looked around, thinking about his entire life of miraculous achievements and the recent apparition in his dream - and what he had come there to accomplish. He felt uncertain that he could actually influence a time that had already gone.

Suddenly, he noticed that there was another beach house very near, just across a patch of sand and rocks, similar to his. And while he was wondering why he hadn't seen it before, the door opened and a girl came out. It was a dark brown haired Indian girl, walking slowly in his direction. She had a long scarf tied around her waist and a string of pearls strangely shining around her head. Her forehead was adorned with a shiny symbol placed between her eyes. “The third eye”, he thought, looking at the

intensely shiny silver sign on her forehead, right below the string of pearls. When she came closer, her black eyes glimmered toward him with a smile.

“Good morning”, she said.

“Good morning. Are we neighbors?” he asked her.

She was walking with bare feet in the sand, and she stepped up on his porch without hesitation, the moment she got nearer. He kept staring at her, wondering where she had come from.

“Yes we’re neighbors” she replied casually, still smiling. “My name is Phoenix. What’s yours?”

“I’m Lucky, that’s my name.”

“You’re Lucky?”

She laughed, amused.

“Why do you have a dog’s name?” she teased him.

“Why do you have a bird’s name?” he returned the question, unflinching.

She shrugged, playfully.

“It’s a mythical bird.”

“And mine is a lucky dog.”

Her dark chocolate eyes stared for a while into his greenish sea-like glance. She pondered; then she gave up trying to confront or defy him. ‘Is she testing me?’ he wondered, because it seemed that way to him. She changed the direction of the conversation:

“So I guess your totem animal is the wolf?”

“And yours is the bird?”

She laughed.

“Why do you always answer with another question?”

He stared into her eyes, not changing his expression. His green stare seemed a bit distant and unrevealing, like the mysterious sea spreading to the horizon, whispering in waves.

“Are you looking for something?” he asked her.

She started playing with her colorful bracelet, fondling it round and round.

“Have you seen my father?”

“Is he an Indian man with amulets around his neck and feathers on his head?”

“Yes, that must be him.”

“Well, he just passed by. I saw him a while ago.”

Phoenix looked along the shore, but Lucky had the feeling she wasn't going to search for her Indian father and she wasn't interested in finding him anytime soon. She was only trying to make up a pretext to be there.

“Do you like my porch?” he asked her amused, because she was still standing next to him, looking absently to the distance.

She didn't respond right away, as if she was lost in thoughts. Then she turned to glance at him inquiringly and seriously from under her long eyelashes:

“Do you have the Dream Catcher?” she suddenly asked.

He was no longer surprised about the mention of the dream catcher. He knew the object was magical and he expected anything was possible if it was related to it. Maybe more people knew about it and wanted it for themselves... He realized he had to keep it in sight. He looked back to the window where the turquoise feathers were swinging with the breeze.

Phoenix was still waiting for his answer, almost frowning at him from the dark depths of her unrevealing eyes. He grinned at her, as the sunlight was blinding him from above, covering her contour in a confusing radiance:

“It’s interesting that not even half an hour has gone by and two people already asked me about my dream catcher. Yes, I have one. What about it?”

“You be careful with it”, she said casually and turned around, leaving towards her house.

He watched her go, taking step by step in the hot sand, until she went through the door of the neighboring beach house. “The girl next door”, he thought. He didn’t try to figure out why she and her father had mentioned the dream catcher telling him to be careful about it. Did they know he had a mission? Did they want to bargain with him? But it was his dream catcher. And he was waiting for a sign from the voice of another universe. He was ready to get to action.

The sign came that evening, after he fell asleep; he had been watching the lighthouse across the bay blinking in distant rhythm above the dark whispering waves. At night the sea would become even more powerful, the waves splashing louder and shuffling their foam ashore with fierce determination. He felt his eyes close with the image of the dream catcher still by the window, a glimmering round shadow in the moonlight with the spider web projected through the glass, across the starry sky. Immediately after he slipped in a state of peaceful mindless sleep, Spark appeared in his dream, as bright as a constellation. She was standing by his bed, glowing in warm rays of light.

“Wake up, Lucky” she told him firmly.

Her voice filled the room and stirred his mind alert. But he was already staring at her, leaning on his elbows and blinking repeatedly to adjust to the overflowing light shining directly in his eyes.

“Hey C.C. I’m fully awake” he said. “Are you really here?”

“Yes, I’m really here”, she smiled. “Now listen: tomorrow is a full moon. You must take the dream catcher and go to the shore when the moon is in the middle of the sky. That’s when you will be able to get through the gates of time and space. You will get to the ship – the dream catcher will take you there – and you’ll warn the sailors to change direction so that the Titanic won’t hit the iceberg as it did. If you can do that, it will change everything.”

“Will that save the balance of your universe?”

“It might. And it might improve yours too.”

And then Spark vanished. The room turned dark again. The moonlight was passing through the dream catcher and throwing shadows on the floor. Lucky realized he was indeed awake: and that meant he had actually seen the Central Conscience of another world right next to him, without having to dream about it. She was already interfering in his day by day reality.

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At dawn he went swimming.

He knew he had to wait until the night would display a full moon in the sky.

In the distance, above the horizon line, the sun was rising from the water like a red eye. As it kept rising higher and burning a brighter orange, it looked more like a beating heart. Suddenly, he saw a transparent image of Spark's smile and blazing stare, appearing over the sun, in the sky.

"Tonight" he heard her voice like a whisper above the waves.

"Yes, I know", he answered in his mind.

And then he started swimming to the shore. He had the feeling that he could end up in the undefined zone of lost ships and planes, if he spent more time so far out at sea.

Coming out of the waves with water dripping on his skin and his wet hair getting colder from the morning chill, his eyes discovered the Indian girl Phoenix who seemed to have been waiting for him, crouched on a rock, holding her knees and observing him from under her long eyelashes. She seemed to have been on the shore longer than he was aware of.

"If you've come looking for the dream catcher, it's not here", he told her. "I don't have it with me right now".

"I'm not looking for the dream catcher."

“What are you looking for then?”

“Nothing in particular. I was just watching you. Actually, I’m waiting to see the dolphins.”

“Dolphins?”

“Yes, there are dolphins swimming at dawn. They come out to play and swim closer to the shore when the waves are peaceful.”

The sea was always more peaceful in the morning; its surface like a mirror, silver, blue and pink, reflecting the red and gold sunrise, was moving softly as if alive and asleep in drowsy dreams.

“I came to see the dolphins and I saw you instead.” Phoenix said. “Do you need a towel?”

“Do you have one?”

“I don’t... not yet anyway. But I can get one from the house.”

“Well... thanks. I’m used to getting out of the water like this.”

And he shook his head, scattering drops of water around.

It was refreshing to feel the salty air of the sea after having been in the water for an hour. It was as if he belonged to the sea even more.

“Is your name still Lucky?” he heard Phoenix ask him.

He couldn’t tell if she had said it playfully or seriously.

He found a spot on a rock and decided to sit there, watching the horizon.

“What are you doing here?” he asked her without looking too much in her direction.

“I told you: I’m watching the dolphins.”

“But there are no dolphins.”

“There will be.”

They remained in silence for a while. Then Phoenix spoke again:



“You can’t stop that shipwreck, you know. It’s done. It’s over. You can’t turn it around. You can’t make it take a different direction now because its path is already carved in the past: it will just go as it did - no matter what you do. Why focus on the past and not on the future?”

Lucky was again not very shocked that she had knowledge of things she was not supposed to know.

“I’ll just have to try and see what happens”, he answered. “What else do you know?”

“I know about the pier where ships and planes get lost.”

“What do you know about it?”

“It’s a miniature world in your mind...” she joked.

“It’s actually an open gate to another universe.”

“If you say so... But it’s the only thing you can do to save them.”

“What?”

“Send them there.”

He thought about it. Did she really know what she was saying?

He suddenly noticed two dolphins in the distance, jumping through the waves in the reflections of sunrise.

“Look! They’re here!” he exclaimed.

Phoenix smiled.

“I told you.”

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