

Chapter 4: Patricia

Patricia Wilson woke with a start. The dream fading the moment her eyes opened and she took her first gasping breath. Fading. Fading. Something about a pale blue sky. A plain of craggy rocks. A cliff. Wings? Falling. There was a face in a stream of water. Fading. Gone. All that was left was the feeling in her stomach and a sensation of loss. The tingle in her fingertips of going too close to an edge catching yourself, and looking over.

The room was dark. Her alarm clock, placed on the other side of the room as get-to-work-on-time strategy too blurry to see. She fumbled in the dark on the night stand for her glasses. Her fingers still tingling with the sensation of falling weren't cooperating. Glasses. On. 4:40 a.m. Or at least she thought it was a.m. Her confusion was all encompassing. Suddenly she wasn't quite sure if she should be getting up from a nap, or if it was Saturday, or if it was Summer or Winter. The more she thought about it the more possibilities came up. The idea that maybe the past 20 years of her life were a dream floated through her mind like an optimistic balloon.

Familiar snoring to her left put things into focus. She was who she was. It was 4:40 in the morning. She wasn't late for work. She was instead being cheated 2 hours of well deserved sleep.

Flopping her head down on the pillow. The comfortable blank state of sleep was all she really wanted. But her heartbeat kept her up. And just on the edge of her mind, the dream. Like a word you can't quite remember, or a song's chorus you repeat can't complete.

She certainly couldn't get back to sleep now. Fuck. 2 hours of lost sleep. She stared at the ceiling, gray in the predawn light. I'm not accomplishing anything just laying thinking of a dream I can't remember, she thought. Might as well watch something on the tube.

She swung her legs out of the bed and felt around with her feet for slippers. Grabbed a Donald Duck oversized t-shirt from the floor and

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pulled it on, the coolness of the fabric waking her. The smell of her husband who had worn the shirt before bringing her even more back to reality.

She plodded down the hall to the family room. She noticed her daughter’s bedroom door was shut. It wasn’t until she was in the kitchen considering eating a bowl or two of Apple Jacks that she realized that her daughter’s closed door might be significant.

Rainbow insisted her door remain, at the very least, open a crack. She needed night-lights and confirmation that people were nearby. Even at 14 the habit endured. Most teens would be more than happy to shut their parents out of their lives completely. During the day all bets were off with hours spent behind closed and locked doors. Mornings spent pounding on bathroom doors. But the bedroom door, while sleeping, was always open. An unspoken constant.

And now the door was closed. Strange.

Patricia shuffled back to Rainbow’s room.

It was probably nothing, she was certain. But between the falling dream, and that feeling of... something... loss?

And... Rainbow’s was door closed.