

Life is But a Dream

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I don't really have a good synopsis for this story, but it's going to be kind of short.

Be prepared to cry a little when you read this. I don't really know how to describe it, you'll just have to read it I guess.

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Chapter 1 - Chapter 1	2
Chapter 2 - Chapter 2	3
Chapter 3 - Chapter 3	5
Chapter 4 - Chapter 4	6

1 - Chapter 1

One moment...

One moment is all it takes to change a person's life.

One moment can change how we look at the world.

One moment can last a lifetime.

Nightmares. That's all that's constant in this ever shifting life. His face, drifting in and out of my dreams. I'm forced to relive that moment over and over again, each night. I'm helpless to stop it. And it keeps happening, again and again and again. Then, black nothingness. The void. He's falling into the void, and I can't pull him up. No one wants to help me. No one can.

Jeanne sat in her bed, struggling to keep her eyes open to write in her diary. It seemed to be her only true friend after the accident happened. If she went to sleep, she'd only be awakened by her recurring nightmare.

As she finished writing the last paragraph, she glanced at a framed photograph that stood on her bedside table. It showed a handsome young man, smiling, happy. Slightly tousled blond hair seemed to absorb small amounts of light, giving it a golden glow. Deep blue eyes reflected a kind soul. And the smile, that one moment, his smile was perfect. A beautiful photograph, yet...

A single crystalline tear rolled down Jeanne's face as she gazed at that picture. She wiped it away slowly, then closed her diary and set it next to the photo. She turned off her lamp, and prepared for her dreams.

After all, why should tonight be any different? Nothing had been peaceful or normal since the accident. Dreams became nightmares, even in her waking moments, his face haunted her. The face of her dearly departed boyfriend, Derek. dearly departed boyfriend, Derek.

2 - Chapter 2

The alarm buzzed with all its might, easily waking Jeanne from her fitful sleep. As she'd expected, it had been haunted by nightmares.

Breakfast was nothing special. Just plain old cold cereal. She took her time eating. It was Saturday. No need to struggle through school today. After all, her mind would not be on her work.

It's time to walk and think.

Hours later, while walking through the park, Jeanne felt something that sent a shiver down her spine. She didn't know what it was, but she felt something.

It was a relief to see a familiar face walking toward her. She could always count on her good friend, Ryumaru, when she needed cheering up. The two girls had been friends since either could remember, and had helped each other through rough times, but none quite like this.

"Hey Jeanne." Ryumaru said as they came closer. "Hi Ryu." Jeanne replied halfheartedly. "C'mon, let's sit down."

"Oh Ryu, I don't know what to do! Nightmares, chills, help! My life is upside down, I don't know what to do!" Jeanne gushed. "I miss him so much, I..." She broke down in tears. "It's going to be okay, let it out." Ryu said soothingly, putting an arm around her friend's shoulder.

"I should have been more -sniff- aware. I could have stopped him, could have kept him near me, could have..." Thinking about this made her cry even harder. "Jeanne, that's the survivor's guilt talking. There was nothing anyone, not even you, could do. No one could have anticipated it, no one could have-" "NO! I COULD HAVE DONE SOMETHING!" Jeanne yelled, cutting off Ryu. "I COULD HAVE SAVED HIM! I COULD HAVE... I could have..." She drifted off. "No, you know you couldn't have-" "YOU JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND!"

Jeanne jumped up and stormed off, leaving Ryu to sigh and hope her friend would be okay.

"No one understands, no one gets it, no one can... Sigh." Jeanne mumbled. "I know I could have done something, I know that could have, should have turned out differently." She sighed again and walked quickly, to keep warm in the chill wind.

"If anything, I wish I could at least find the class ring he lost a few days before..." She visualized it in her mind. The slightly tarnished silver, the blue stone that matched his eyes, the engraving... She opened her eyes and continued on a few steps, until her foot hit something small and hard.

Looking down, she saw his class ring, laying there on the ground, just as she had pictured it. Plain as day, she had found it.

"I don't believe it. I do not believe it one bit! This is really his ring." Her eyes welled up with tears as she slipped it in her pocket. Jeanne was about to continue walking on when a sudden gust of wind blew a sheet of lined paper into her face. She reached up and pulled it off, ready to crumple it up and toss it away when the writing on it caught her eye. It couldn't be, but it was. It was his handwriting. The message was simple:

The sadness will slip away if you let it.

Follow me in your dreams.

I'll be waiting.

- Derek

Her breath caught in her chest. It was his handwriting, and that sounded like something he'd say, but there was no way. It couldn't be from him.

"Follow me in your dreams", yeah right. How could she when her dreams always ended the same way. Still, it was from him, so she tucked it in her pocket next to the ring.

3 - Chapter 3

Jeanne arrived back at her apartment with no trouble. Setting the ring and note on her bedside table, she prepared herself for yet another nightmare-filled sleep. Before she drifted off to sleep she promised herself she'd call Ryumaru tomorrow and apologize for storming off like that.

But for now, it's time to sleep.

Fields, as far as the eye can see. Grassy plains, under a starry sky, accented by the light of a full moon. She sighed and laid back. So peaceful, serene. "The only thing that could make this better would be Derek, but I'll settle for a shooting star." Jeanne said softly. As if it heard her words, the brightest star promptly fell, leaving a streak across the sky.

"Your wish is my command." Chuckled a deep voice. A familiar voice. Jeanne jumped up and started looking around frantically as if she lost a million dollars. "Looking for me?" The voice was behind her. She turned around, and dashed forward, for there stood Derek.

"Oh Derek, I've missed you so much!" Jeanne cried, hugging him, It was indeed Derek, the one person she thought she had lost. "I never really left you Jeanne, I was always there beside you, even though you couldn't see me." Jeanne looked up into his eyes, they were filled with tears like hers. "Then this is really a dream? This has to be, you..." "Jeanne, what is a dream? Is a dream any more real than events occurring while you are awake?"

The scenery changed. They appeared to be orbiting Earth now, though neither needed a space suit. Jeanne gasped. "How, how is this possible? Derek, what's going on?" "This is a dream to you. This is my reality now. Jeanne..."

"Derek, I need to know one thing. Was there anything I could have done? Could I have saved you?"

"Would you like to find out?" "More than anything." He smiled. Then take my hand, as we leap into the unknown." She grasped it tightly, as she was overcome with the sensation of falling.

When Jeanne opened her eyes, they were at the street corner. Derek didn't seem to remember that just seconds before they were orbiting earth. He pushed the button to cross, and the "Walk" sign appeared. Jeanne knew what was going to happen. But how could she stop it? She couldn't just say, "Derek wait! This is a dream and I need you to stop right there, or something bad will happen!" She tried to grab his sleeve as he stepped into the crosswalk, but she missed. She froze, not knowing what to do except watch. When he was halfway into the crosswalk, he turned and called, "C'mon! Jeanne, keep up!" She only could yell "DEREK!!!" as the now familiar roar from her nightmares started. An 18-wheel truck barreled through the red light at 60 miles per hour, right towards Derek... The drunk carjacker's foot was unrelenting on the accelerator. Jeanne Screamed and covered her eyes as she waited for the crash.

The crash never came. Instead, comforting arms surrounded her and held her close. "You see Jeanne?" Came the dream Derek's voice. "Even knowing what was going to happen you couldn't have done anything. This was meant to be. I know it seems unfair, but... Someday, we'll both understand."

4 - Chapter 4

“Derek, how am I going to understand? How? How can I go on without you?” “Jeanne, I know it’s hard, but try. This dream, it’s real!” “HOW? HOW IS IT REAL? I’M JUST GOING TO WAKE UP AND GO THROUGH ANOTHER TORTUROUS DAY! I-“ “Jeanne, that’s enough.” Derek cut her off.

“This dream to you is reality to me. When you wake up, you will be in your reality. But how do we know either of our realities is the real reality? It boggles the mind, but try to follow! Life is but a dream, Jeanne, some just don’t know it. We’re never really apart, as long as we still can remember each other. As long as you can dream, you can see me. We’re dreaming on the stars here Jeanne, let’s let the sadness slip away, and enjoy ourselves.” Jeanne frowned as she thought. “Let the sadness slip away? The note! And the ring! But, how?” “To be honest, I don’t know myself.” Both chuckled for a moment before Jeanne spoke up again. “Derek, even so, this is still only a dream to me. I don’t know if I’ll be able to make it through tomorrow, and the day after, and the day after that.” “Jeanne, You’re happy to see me right, even though this is only a “dream”? Well, happiness will show tomorrow, Jeanne. Happiness will show tomorrow.”

“Happiness will show tomorrow.” Repeated Jeanne. Derek was slowly fading away as her dream ended, but those four words comforted her greatly. Back in her bed, she instinctively looked at the note she found. It read:

We’re dreaming on the stars here.
The sadness will slip away if you let it.
Follow me in your dreams.
Happiness will show tomorrow.
-Derek

Jeanne smiled, truly happy for the first time in weeks, and went to start her day. After all, you are never truly alone.

The End