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JAYNE ANN  
KRENTZ



FALLING  
AWAKE

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*Book design by Stephanie Huntwork*

For Louisa Edwards, with thanks for the title. Yep, you were definitely cut out for a career in publishing!

## DREAM ANALYSIS NUMBER: 2-10

*Prepared for:* Client # 2

*Rank of Dreamer:* Level 5 on the Belvedere Lucid Dream Scale

*Analyst:* I. Wright, Research Assistant, Belvedere Center for Sleep Research

### ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The elements and symbols indicative of extreme violence and sexual perversion in this dream are so exaggerated and so bizarre that they point to the conclusion that the individual perpetrating the acts is in the grip of a chaotic bloodlust. It is, however, the opinion of this analyst that such a conclusion would be a mistake. On the contrary, it is likely that the perpetrator may have deliberately staged his crimes with the goal of ensuring that investigators will view them as the creations of a deranged mind.

This analyst suggests that the key to unlocking the hidden message of this dream is the red scarf that the dreamer saw when he opened the closet door. Lacking additional context, this is as far as it is possible to take the analysis.

*Submitted by:* I. Wright

PS: This analyst cannot help but notice that the dreamer (Client # 2) again reports the excessive and disorienting noise of the roller coaster in the gateway dream. This is the third

such dream in which that occurs. It indicates that the dreamer is still experiencing a considerable degree of physical pain. Although Client # 2 is clearly capable of controlling this discomfort while in the Level 5 lucid dream state, it is, at the very least, a serious distraction.

It is assumed that Client # 2 consulted a doctor as this analyst advised in postscripts to the first two of these “loud” dreams and did not receive much help. Additional steps to help manage the pain and discomfort should be taken immediately.

This analyst suggests that the dreamer make an appointment with an acupuncturist.

## DREAM ANALYSIS NUMBER: 2-11

*Prepared for:* Client # 2

*Rank of Dreamer:* Level 5 on the Belvedere Lucid Dream Scale

*Analyst:* I. Wright, Research Assistant, Belvedere Center for Sleep Research.

### ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The repetition of the color aqua blue is the most significant aspect of this dream report. All of these blue elements (the hammer, computer, photograph and mirror) have at least two things in common: (1) each is an object that is not customarily aqua blue in color, and (2) each is an object that does not appear to belong to the setting in which it was found. It is no doubt for these reasons that Client # 2 has identified them with an odd color while in the Level 5 lucid dream state.

It is strongly suggested that these items be reexamined in light of this analysis.

More detailed context would, as always, be *greatly appreciated* by this analyst as it would allow for a more complete interpretation.

*Submitted by:* I. Wright

PS: This analyst is pleased to note that the extreme roller coaster noise of the earlier gateway dreams has receded in this dream report. She hopes this means that the acupuncture was

successful and that the dreamer is no longer experiencing as much physical pain as was previously indicated.

It is also assumed that Client # 2 is continuing to follow the steps this analyst recommended at the outset of this consulting relationship. In this analyst's experience, these measures help mitigate the traumatic effects of violent and bizarre Level 5 dreams: (1) Eat a primarily vegetarian diet (some fish is allowed but the client should definitely avoid red meat). (2) Do not watch violent films (old-fashioned 1930s-style screwball comedies are strongly suggested). (3) Do not read serial killer and other such graphically violent novels. They are obviously much too similar to your Level 5 dreams and will tend to re-inforce the violent imagery. Romance novels are highly recommended instead.



A funeral always made for a bad day. Knowing that it was probably his screwup that had put Katherine Ralston into the ground made things a whole lot worse for Ellis Cutler that afternoon.

He was supposed to be able to predict the actions of his quarry. Everyone who had ever worked with him said he was a major dream talent. Hell, he was a legend back at Frey-Salter, Inc., or at least he had been until a few months ago, when the rumors started up.

But in spite of his track record, the grim truth was that it had never even occurred to him that Vincent Scargill might kill Katherine.

*"May God in his infinite mercy grant to Katherine's family and*

*friends the serenity and peace of mind that can only come from the sure and certain knowledge that their loved one is at last in a safe harbor. . . ."*

Katherine had been murdered in her apartment in Raleigh, North Carolina, but her relatives had brought her body home to this small town in Indiana to bury. It was ten o'clock in the morning, but the muggy heat of a Midwestern summer day was building fast. The sky was heavy and leaden. Wind stirred the old oaks that stood sentinel in the cemetery. Ellis could hear thunder in the distance.

He kept apart from the crowd of mourners, occupying his own private space. The others were all strangers to him. He had met Katherine on only a handful of occasions. She had been hired after he officially resigned from his position at Frey-Salter to *pursue other interests*, as Jack Lawson put it. He still freelanced for Lawson, however, and he allowed himself to be dragged back half a dozen times a year to conduct seminars with the new recruits. Katherine had attended a couple of his workshops. He recalled her as an attractive, vivacious blonde.

Lawson had told him she was not only a Level Five dreamer, but also a whiz with computers. Lawson loved high-tech gadgets but had no aptitude for dealing with them. He had been delighted with Katherine's skill.

Ellis felt like a vulture standing at Katherine's graveside. The malevolent cloud cover made the wraparound, obsidian-tinted sunglasses he wore unnecessary, but he did not remove them. Force of habit. He had discovered a long time ago that dark

glasses were one more way of keeping a safe distance between himself and other people.

The solemn service did not last long. When the final prayers had been spoken, Ellis turned and started back toward his rental car. There was nothing more he could do here.

“Did you know her?”

The voice came from behind and a few yards off. Ellis halted and looked back over his shoulder. A young man who appeared to be in his early twenties was approaching swiftly across the wet grass. There was a churning intensity in the long, quick strides. He had Katherine’s blue eyes and lean, dramatic features. Katherine’s personnel file had mentioned a twin brother.

“We were colleagues,” Ellis said. He searched for something that might sound appropriate and came up empty. “I’m sorry.”

“Dave Ralston.” Dave halted in front of him, bitter disappointment tightening his face and narrowing his eyes. “I thought maybe you were a cop.”

“What made you think that?”

“You look like one.” Dave shrugged, impatient and intense. “Also, you’re not from around here. No one recognized you.” He hesitated. “I’ve heard that the police often attend the funeral when there’s been a murder. Some theory about the killer showing up in the crowd.”

Ellis shook his head once. “I’m sorry,” he said again.

“You said you worked with my sister?”

“I’m affiliated with Frey-Salter, the firm where she was employed in North Carolina. My name is Ellis Cutler.”

Recognition and suspicion quickened in Dave's expression. "Katherine mentioned you. Said you used to work as some kind of special analyst at Frey-Salter but that you'd left to become an outside consultant. She said you were practically a legend."

"She exaggerated."

Dave stared hard at the cream-colored, generic-looking Ford parked under an oak. "That yours?"

"A rental. Picked it up at the airport."

Dave's mouth twisted in frustration. Ellis's intuition told him that the young man had been busily memorizing the license plate until he discovered the car was a rental.

"You probably heard that the cops think my sister was murdered because she interrupted a burglary in her apartment."

"Yes," Ellis said.

He hadn't just heard the theory, he'd read every word of the investigating officer's report, probing for anything that might give him a lead in his own quest. He'd also looked at the photos of the victim. He hoped Dave hadn't seen those. Katherine had been shot at close range.

"My parents and the others are buying that story." Dave glanced briefly over his shoulder at the small group of people walking slowly away from the grave. "But I'm not. Not for a minute."

Ellis nodded, saying nothing.

"Do you know what I think, Mr. Cutler?"

"No."

Dave's hands tightened into fists at his sides. "I'm almost pos-

itive that Katherine was killed because of her connection to Frey-Salter.”

Lawson was not going to like this, Ellis thought. The last thing the director wanted was to draw attention to his private fiefdom. After all, Frey-Salter, Inc., was a carefully constructed corporate front for the highly classified government agency that Jack Lawson ruled.

“Why would anyone want to kill Katherine?” Ellis asked, keeping his voice as neutral as possible.

“I’m not sure,” Dave admitted, his face stony. “But I think it might have been because she discovered something going on there that she wasn’t supposed to know. She said that Frey-Salter was real big on confidentiality. Lot of secrecy involved. When she took the job she had to sign papers promising not to discuss sensitive information with anyone outside the firm.”

Something about the way Dave’s gaze shifted briefly and then quickly refocused in an intent stare told Ellis that he probably knew a lot more about his sister’s work than he should have. But if there was a problem in that direction, it was Lawson’s concern, he thought. He had his own issues.

“Signing a confidentiality statement is a common requirement in companies that conduct high-stakes research,” Ellis said mildly. “Corporate espionage is a major problem.”

“I know.” Dave hunched his shoulders. Anger vibrated through him in visible waves. “I’m wondering if maybe Katherine uncovered something like that going on.”

“Corporate espionage?”

“Right. Maybe someone killed her to keep her quiet.”

Just what he needed, Ellis thought, a distraught brother who had come up with a conspiracy theory to explain his sister’s murder.

“Frey-Salter does sleep and dream research,” Ellis reminded him, trying to sound calm and authoritative. “There’s not a lot of motive for murder in that field.”

Dave took a step back, suspicion gathering in his eyes. “Why should I trust you to tell me the truth? You work for Frey-Salter.”

“Outside consultant.”

“What’s the difference? You’re still loyal to them. They’re paying your salary.”

“Only a portion of it,” Ellis said. “I’ve got a day job now.”

“If you hardly knew Katherine, why are you here?” Dave flexed his hands. “Maybe you’re the one who killed her. Maybe that theory about the murderer showing up at the funeral is for real.”

This was not going well.

“I didn’t kill her, Dave.”

“Someone did, and I don’t think it was a random burglar. One of these days I’ll find out who murdered my sister. When I do, I’m going to make sure he pays.”

“Let the cops handle this. It’s their job.”

“Bullshit. They’re useless.” Dave whipped around and walked swiftly away across the cemetery.

Ellis exhaled slowly and crossed the grass to where he had parked the rental. He peeled off the hand-tailored charcoal gray jacket, sucking in a sharp breath when the casual movement sent

a jolt of pain through his right shoulder. One of these days he would learn, he thought. The wound had healed and he was getting stronger. The visits to the acupuncturist had helped, much to his surprise. But some things would never again be the same. It was lucky he hadn't been passionate about golf or tennis before Scargill almost succeeded in killing him because he sure wasn't going to play either sport in the future.

He put the jacket in the backseat and got behind the wheel. But he did not start the engine immediately. Instead, he sat for a long time, watching the last of the mourners disperse. You never knew. Maybe there was something to that old theory about the killer showing up at the funeral.

If Vincent Scargill had come to bear witness to his crime, however, he succeeded in keeping himself out of sight. Not an easy thing to do in a small town in Indiana.

When there was no one left except the two men with the shovels, Ellis fired up the engine and drove toward the road that would take him back to the airport in Indianapolis. The news of Katherine's death had caught up with him while he was engaged in a series of business meetings in the San Francisco Bay area. He had barely made it to the funeral.

The storm struck twenty minutes later. It unleashed a full barrage of the spectacular special effects that make storms in that part of the country famous. The torrential rain cut visibility down to a bare minimum. Ellis didn't mind the wall of water. He could have driven the complicated maze of roads and state highways that led back to Indianapolis blindfolded. He had driven them

once to get to the cemetery and once was all he needed when it came to learning a route. The part of him that intuitively picked up on patterns and registered them in his memory was equally adept at navigating.

Lightning lit up the ominous sky. Thunder cracked. The rain continued, deluging the fields of soybeans and corn that stretched for miles on either side of the highway. The rear wheels of passing cars sent up great plumes of water.

He felt the rush of adrenaline, wonder and awe that he always experienced when the elements went wild. He savored powerful storms the way he savored driving his Maserati, the way, once upon a time, he had savored roller coasters.

The raw, exhilarating passion of the thunderstorm made him think of Tango Dancer, the mysterious lady who sometimes walked through his dreams. He wondered what it would be like to have her sitting in the passenger seat beside him right now. Did she get a kick out of storms? His intuition, or maybe it was his overheated imagination, told him she did but he had no way of knowing for sure.

He wondered what she was doing at that moment out in sunny California. Although she had appeared in his fantasies more times than he could count during the past few months, he had never met her in person. That situation was supposed to have changed by now. He'd made plans. But Vincent Scargill had put those plans on hold.

Reluctantly he pulled his thoughts away from Tango Dancer and contemplated his next move in what his former boss and



sometimes client Jack Lawson referred to as his *obsession* with Vincent Scargill. He would go to Raleigh, he decided, and check out the apartment where Katherine's body had been found. Maybe the cops had overlooked some small clue that would point him in a direction that would lead to Scargill.

Unfortunately, there was one real big problem with his personal theory concerning the identity of the man who had murdered Katherine Ralston. It was the reason he had not told Dave Ralston that he thought he knew the name of his sister's killer.

Vincent Scargill was dead.

Dave Ralston sat in his car, parked out of sight on a side road, and watched Ellis Cutler drive away into the oncoming storm. Katherine's description of the Frey-Salter legend haunted him. *He's supposed to be the best agent Lawson ever had, but Cutler makes me nervous. You can't tell what he's thinking or feeling. It's as if he's always standing just outside the circle. He watches, but he doesn't join in the game, if you know what I mean. He's the walking definition of a loner.*

Loners were dangerous, Dave thought. They went their own way and played by their own rules. Maybe this one had committed murder. Or maybe Ellis Cutler was pursuing some secret agenda on behalf of the mysterious Jack Lawson. Either way, Cutler was a for-real, genuine lead, the first one he'd been able to find. He had a name and the number of the rental car. This evening after the crowd of mourners left his parents' house, he