

# **Time for Only One**

## **Dream**

**by**

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**(1994/2010)**

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The man glanced nervously down at the pistol in his right hand - the metal felt cold against his bare fingers, and the gun's weight felt satisfying and business-like. The man's left hand hung impotently by his side, and an empty bottle lay at his feet speaking of recent courage that had been sorely needed. Around him, the grey mist waited in quiet expectation, and a fog-horn moaned balefully in the distance.

Eyes, bleared now with indifference, looked at the mist... the bottle... the gun... Nothing looked back... and nothing stirred.

With a soft voice, the mist started to speak: "Before you go, tell me your tale, and allow me to share these last moments with you."

"What the fu..., spluttered the man, starting back, "who the hell are you?"

The mist swirled, and formed into a spectre in a long dark overcoat, and a dark felt hat was pulled low on his head,

"I warn you... Don't try to stop me," menaced the man.

"I won't," replied the spectre gently, "it's your choice... But first... please... please tell me your tale... Tell me your tale that these last moments will not be lost forever in the mist of time... Tell me your tale that one may stand as testator of these proceedings, and ratify the choice."

The man's eyes narrowed in puzzlement, and he whispered, "Who are you?"

"I am no one, and I am of no consequence. Come, my friend... share with me your tale."

"What's the point?" snapped the man as he nudged the bottle with his foot... "Nobody gives a shit anyway!"

"I give a shit!" said the spectre softly. "Share these last moments with a fellow traveller in the cycle of existence."

The man looked up, but he could only see shadow beneath the hat's brim. Yet there was a haunting something emanating from the spectre. The man searched for clues, and as he did so, his eyes seemed to clear, and the bottled courage seemed to evaporate within his veins. The man probed for the spectre's eyes beneath the hat, but nothing was revealed... But there seemed to be something there... a faint misty glow perhaps?

The man's reverie was interrupted when he heard his own voice speaking, "It happened yesterday afternoon... on Main Street. A van swerved to miss a kid who'd run into the street... It wasn't the guy's

fault... He mounted the pavement, and hit a woman who was passing by... She was seven and a half months pregnant... and... and she was my wife...

He paused for a moment, and seemed to be reaching out with his mind... reaching out to understand something that was there... but wasn't there... "When I got to the hospital she was dead... but the baby..." He paused again, "The baby... premature... you know... was in one of those incubator things. He was just lying there on a soft pink blanket - in the warm... No tubes or anything... I knelt down, and just looked at him... They let me put my hands through the hole-things in the side, and gently hold him in my bare hands... He was so small that one of my hands made a perfect cot for him..."

The man looked up and smiled a far away smile, and softly continued, "Oh, God... he was so small, and so soft... and so warm..." A tear grew in the corner of his eye as he continued, "I put my face close to the glass, and just watched... He opened his little eyes, and looked at me... God, can you believe that... he actually looked at me... He was so perfect, just lying there... I couldn't do anything, I just knelt there holding him, and looking at him... He never made a sound..."

The tear escaped down the man's face, and he lowered his head. "Then... then the little guy slowly closed his eyes, snuggled into my hands, and had time to dream one dream before he died... Oh, God... he died there... right there in my hands... he was so small... and so perfect... and I couldn't do anything..."

After a few moments, the man looked far into the mist, and whispered a sigh, "I guess his mother needed him more than I did... Shit!" There was a pause, then the man said, "How about that... Just one dream... that's all..." His voice faded, "Just one dream..."

The man looked up, and there were questions in his eyes; questions that needed an answer; questions that were directed at the spectre. "Is it possible," the man quietly asked, "that someone could live a whole life in one dream? Had he waited for me to come? Did he know me - that I was his dad? That I loved him? That I held him in my hands while he dreamed his one dream? I got to know."

The spectre nodded and a warmth seemed to fill the air. Then words came, "He knew you would come... He waited for you... He knew you were his dad... He knew that you love his mother and him... and he wanted you to know that it was alright..."

"But... did he have to go?"

"Yes... But he wanted to have his one dream with you... He wanted to have his one dream in your hands... A dream about you and his mother... A dream that made him happy... A dream that made him glad that you had allowed him to be your son... Then he went... He went to his mother... to wait for you there..."

"To wait... To wait for me there?" whispered the man, and his hand tightened on the gun.

"Yes, to wait... But he doesn't want you to hurry... He wants his dad to finish the life he couldn't have... and he wants his dad to dream all the dreams that he didn't have time to dream."

"But... what dreams... what are the dreams he didn't have time for?" asked the man.

"Those were the dreams of blue skies, of love, and of laughter. Of warm days, and fun at the sea. Of starlight reflecting on the new crisp snow. Of waiting at the end of a day for his dad to come home. Of falling asleep, cradled against his mother. Of ice-cream and Christmas, of dogs, and bicycles. Of trees and burgers. Of sleepy car rides, late at night, with a warm bed waiting for him at home. Of a little head snuggled amongst fluffy pillows, and sheets that smell of lavender. Of his small hand held in your big one. Of riding high in your arms so he can see better. Of looking into your eyes, and knowing that you love him more than you love yourself. To know that you would show him a world of beauty and hope; a world of wonder and excitement; a world fit for a little boy with dreams to dream... And those dreams can only be fulfilled with his dad..."

"But it's all gone... all lost now..." spat the man.

"No... Never!" cried the spectre. "He'll always be with you, and through your eyes, he and his mother will fulfil all of his dreams... and more!"

"Who are you... that you should know of these things?"

"I've already told you... I'm no one... and I don't know anything."

"What must I do then?"

"Go... Go and live... Let your son have his dreams... And then... when the journey is full... he awaits with his mother for you... And you will again look into his eyes, and there will be time for you to dream one last dream, and then you will go home... to your wife... and to your little son."

"But how do you know this is true?"

"I don't... You do!"

The voice faded, and all was mist once more.

"No... wait... Please don't go," called the man into the mist, "I want to know more."

But the words were swallowed by the mist... there was none to answer... and all was still.

The man carefully put the gun into his pocket, and was about to turn into the mist, when he heard a small boy's voice whisper, "It's all right, dad... I'll teach you..."

The man smiled a knowing smile, and whispered, "I know that now... Let's go home..."

The man's voice faded... the mist swirled for a moment... and he was gone...

End

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