

2023 Creative Writing Contest
10:10 by Barbe Stevenson
1st Place - Short Fiction

Sara went to bed like every other night at exactly 10:00pm

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Sara dreamed of being successful in her career. She dreamed of the recognition she received and the bonus of wealth. She saw her perfect children doing perfectly in school and in social environments. Sara saw her perfect home and how beautiful her gardens were. She saw her soulmate husband. He catered to her every need and want without being asked. He was perfect.

Sara dreamed she drove her dream car into town. Everyone waved at her. Everyone gave her compliments and was happy to see her. A stranger held the door open for her and paid for her coffee at the gas station. A young woman even paid for her lunch. Everyone told Sara how good she was doing and how much they loved and appreciated her. Sara knew everyone in her dream, but not in real life.

Sara woke up. She was back in her bed. She looked over at her clock to see how much more time she had to sleep. Her alarm clock said it was 10:00pm. Puzzled, she grabbed her cell phone. It said it was 10:00pm as well. Sara closed her eyes and tried to go back to sleep. She couldn't make sense of what happened.

Just as Sara dozed off, the very bright white light emerged from the bathroom doorway again. She didn't want to look but she had to see if the alien-like figure was back too. As soon as she looked, her body stiffened. The vibrations started again and continued to intensify. This time she heard the source in her head.

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It asked her, "Sara, what do you really want?" The voice sounded familiar. It sounded soft and kind. Sara recognized that it was the voice of her grandmother.

Sara replied, "I want to be happy. I want others to be happy. I just want a happy world."

It said, "Sara, you make so many people happy. Now, you must choose to be happy to have a happy world."

Sara was flung off her bed and onto the floor. The room was dark. Sara looked at her alarm clock really hoping it didn't say 10:00pm. She was relieved when it said it was 10:10pm.

Sara woke up to her 6:00am alarm. She was surprised at how well she had slept considering whatever that was that happened last night. She got up and did her normal morning routine.

Sara went to the gas station to get her coffee. As she walked up to the gas station door, a stranger was also approaching the door. He held it open for her. Sara nodded in appreciation. She was happy that they had her favorite blend of coffee that morning, thinking this is going to be a good day.

When she got to the cash register. The stranger, who had opened the door for her said, "I got her coffee."

Sara replied, "Thank you. But why are you getting my coffee?"

The stranger said, "You remind me of my sister. She is waiting in the hospital for a heart transplant. She is always doing nice stuff for people."

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Sara sees a woman walking towards her. Sara soon realized that it was her grandmother.

Sara notices more people coming. There is her mom and dad holding hands, walking in the water towards her. She got up and ran to her grandmother and gave her a big hug.

Grandmother Ruth asked, " r s h g